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Records of
Women's Conference
In China
November, 1900

*Coe
ad
cor
loquitur.*

Home Life
of
Chinese Women

"Our experience of each other or of society has the two
characteristics of conveying to us a knowledge of others
yet betraying home to us our ignorance of them."





WOMEN'S CONFERENCE, SHANGHAI, NOVEMBER, 1900.

WOMENS' CONFERENCE
ON THE
HOME LIFE OF CHINESE WOMEN.



PRESIDENT, LADY BLAKE.

VICE-PRESIDENT, MRS. FITCH.

„ „ MRS. LITTLE.



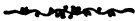
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LOWRIE MEMORIAL CHAPEL, 18 PEKING ROAD.
NOVEMBER 20TH, 21ST, 22ND, AND 23RD, 10—12 A.M.
1900.



In order to take advantage of the enforced presence in Shanghai of workers from all parts of China in this *Annus Funestus*, a committee was formed to convene a Women's Conference, at which all English-speaking ladies, foreign and Chinese, might compare notes concerning the home-life of Chinese women. Lady Blake, wife of the Governor of Hongkong, and already known for her warm interest in Chinese women, at once accepted the invitation of the committee to preside over the meetings, which were held in the very conveniently situated American Presbyterian Chapel, the use of which, with great liberality, was granted free of expense. Four of the King's Daughters undertook to see after the decorations, in which they were helped by two blue jackets from H. M. S. *Hermione*, together with a plentiful supply of flags. They also kindly served as ushers at all the meetings.

A reception was held by the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Addis at their house, 26 The Bund, on the afternoon of Monday, November 19th, when all English and American officials were invited. The various speakers at the Conference, as well as the committee, were also given this opportunity of making the acquaintance of the President, who only arrived from Hongkong on the Sunday, leaving again early the following Saturday.

In connection with the Conference a public meeting, at which gentlemen were invited to be present, was held on the afternoon of Friday, November 23rd, and very numerous attended. Lady Blake was good enough once more to preside, and the meeting was opened with prayer by Dr. Goodrich, but recently arrived from Peking, where he had just gone through the long siege. Bishop Graves, of the American Church, who had been for over a year chairman of a committee investigating into the marriage customs of China, spoke of the binding character of the betrothal, which he said was really the legal ceremony in China, and from which it is impossible to escape except with great difficulty and heavy expenditure. He also pointed out that marriage in China is neither a civil nor an ecclesiastical ceremony, but a family contract, with which the individual has very little to do. Dr. Young J. Allen spoke on the text of his forthcoming book: "Its Treatment of its Women is the Test of a Nation's Civilisation." Mr. James Jones, manager of the International Cotton Mill, Rev. Dr. Mateer, Rev Timothy Richard, Dr. Mary Stone, and Mrs. Fitch, also spoke. Lady Blake's closing words are given in the following pages, as they were her farewell to the Women's Conference. Bishop Cassels, of West China, concluded the meeting with the benediction.

Round the door still stood the band of young girl ushers, who at all our meetings had been such a feature in the Conference, looking so tall and strong with the glow of youth and health upon their faces. But within a fortnight quite suddenly there sounded forth another benediction: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours," and one of our young King's Daughters had gone forth alone to meet her King.

"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."



FIRST DAY.



AT ten o'clock on Tuesday, November 20th, Lady Blake took the chair and invited Mrs. Moule, wife of the Bishop of Mid-China, to open the meeting with prayer, after which Lady Blake as President said :—

It was with no small surprise that I received the invitation with which your committee were so kind as to honour me, asking me to preside at this Conference.

Conscious of the elementary nature of my acquaintance with the questions to be discussed, my first impulse was to decline the proffered honour. We all know the old proverb, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." I remembered it and paused. Then it struck me that in the action deprecated by the adage, the fools may sometimes have their use, for they may beat down the track for the angels to follow. In this instance my self-love leads me to substitute the term "the ignorant" for that of "fools," and I came to the conclusion that my very ignorance might be a reason for adding my mite of effort in clearing a path for those capable and willing to enlighten us concerning things Chinese, especially such as relate to the women of China.

I feel it a very great honour to have been invited to take the chair on the occasion of this—I believe the—first Conference, that has ever been held on the subject of the social position, the customs, and the daily life of one-sixth of the human race, namely the two hundred millions—or thereabouts—of the women of this wonderful and little known Chinese empire.

Whatever may be the difference of opinion on subjects connected with China, we must, I think, all agree that China is a deeply interesting country, remarkable not alone on account of its vast size and teeming population, but because of the genius of its people, that has produced arts so varied and striking and so unlike our own ; public works on a scale of unsurpassed magnitude, and a literature that has few equals in purity of tone and high moral purpose. And above all is China marvellous in the stability of a civilisation that has survived the companions of its youth, the partners of its prime, and which bids fair to outlast many of the rivals of its mature age. When the Egyptian Pharaohs were building the Pyramids and ruling a vanished civilisation, the threads of which we are only now beginning to gather up ; when Semiramis sat on the

throne of Assyria; when the Grecian heroes laid siege to Troy; when the Sabine women made peace between their new-found husbands and their avenging fathers and brothers,—all those long centuries, mounting up to thousands of years ago, the Chinese were a settled and civilised people, leading lives not very different from those their descendants lead nowadays, and who even then could boast an ancient history. Egypt, Babylon, Nineveh, Greece, Rome, those mighty empires of old, the amount of whose wonders and splendours still dazzle our minds and excite our imaginations, all rose, flourished, and passed away, and all the while their contemporary—the remote, unknown Middle Kingdom—built her stupendous walls, dug her great canals, wove her gorgeous fabrics, painted her delicate porcelains, raised her glittering temples, and cared not at all for Egypt, Greece, or any other of the rulers of old. But China possessed a quality that was not shared by the other ancient civilisations; she had the characteristic we call staying power; in this respect no nation has ever yet equalled the Celestial Empire.

But, while admiring the tenacity of existence evinced by the Chinese empire, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that it has the drawback of showing an indifference to progress which may ultimately curtail its hitherto apparent eternity of life. Absolute immobility is impossible, the great law of evolution holds good in China as over all this earth, so we are forced to the conclusion that if China has not moved upwards, however slow may have been the process, little by little she must have retrograded.

“The laws of a nation,” said the historian Gibbon, “form the most instructive portion of its history.” Let us glance at China by the standard of its laws. Its Penal Code, compiled at the beginning of the present dynasty—with the exception that it sanctions the use of torture to extract confessions, and ordains in certain cases the inhuman mode of execution by the “slow and painful process”—is on the whole just and reasonable, and may compare not unfavourably with the laws obtaining at the same period in European countries. But how changed are the criminal laws of the West to-day from what they were two or more centuries ago. For instance the laws of Great Britain, at one time said to have been the most sanguinary in Europe, have been revised and amended till now we can boast that, if our laws err, it is on the side of overleniency, while the Chinese laws, far from having been ameliorated, have degenerated into instruments of injustice and tyranny. Originally the severe enactments of the Chinese code were fenced round with provisions to mitigate their severity, but these are now set aside, and the sentences of magistrates and judges, to which to apply the name of law is a mockery, are too often carried out with a savagery and

callousness that, even in cases in which the victim merits punishment, make us feel that the judge, who can dictate sentences of such ferocious cruelty, is more horrible than the miserable wretch, who writhes before him. Bribery, both to him who received a bribe and to those who negotiated it, or through whose hands it passed, was, according to the ancient code, liable to strict punishment ; but on all sides we are assured that, like most large democracies, China has not escaped the general tendency of democracies and that the length of the purse of the accused materially influences the decisions of his judges.

In comparison with that of China, our civilisation is of yesterday. Nevertheless, we are apt to consider it as already old, and there are even pessimists who hold that the growth has been over-rapid, that the vitality of the fledgeling is not as great as its stature, and that already it shows symptoms of decay. May we not betimes take some hints from the experience of older countries, that may help to avert a calamity such as that. If there is anything to be gathered from the wisdom of the ancients, there must be some hints and not a few warnings we may take from China, and in exchange there may be some lessons, though possibly not so many as Europe supposes, that the people of the Middle Kingdom may learn from us. For this exchange of mutual benefits, it is necessary that Europeans and Chinese should learn to respect whatever is worthy of respect in each other and to know something of each other beyond the mere commercial transactions that, while increasing material prosperity, add little to the weightier matters, that give real zest and charm to life. It is now more than two centuries since Europeans have resided for periods long or short on the shores of China, and it is strange how little progress has been made during that time in social intercourse between the two races, or in mutually understanding one another's ideas and idiosyncrasies. Europeans seem often to believe that the Chinese are incomprehensible beings to Western minds, whose feelings—if they exist—are not our feelings, whose aspirations are different from ours, whose likes and dislikes are almost antagonistic to ours. I confess I do not believe this opinion is correct ; get down to the bedrock of our common humanity and extraordinary as may be the difference in the superstructures, the foundation is the same all the world over. To get to that substratum is the difficulty for us ; possibly from their point of view the task may equally be a difficult one for the Chinese. Probably hitherto we have considered China chiefly from its political standpoint. Political affairs are, of course, of paramount national importance, but the substratum on which they rest is that of social interests, and it is social questions that affect individual happiness or unhappiness most strongly. In every clime and in all countries the position and influence of women,

in social matters, must be of as great importance as that of the masculine element. To understand a country we ought to know something of its women as well as of its men. The absence, or ill regulated force, of female influence, must have a deleterious effect on any society. We all are proud of the progress made in Europe in modern days, and it is in very modern days, not much more than a century ago, that women to any wide extent began to resume their share in the general work of progress in Western lands. As we claim that those countries have advanced since women have done so, may we not also claim that part of such progress is due to the women of Europe and America? Undoubtedly in our own countries the position of women has been largely owing to the spread of the ideas and customs of the Teutonic and Celtic races, in whose ranks from the dawn of their history, women occupied an exceptionally honoured and important position. Tacitus writes that "the Germans suppose some divine and prophetic quality resident in their women and are careful neither to disregard their admonitions, nor to neglect their answers." The Cymri are described by another contemporary writer as accompanied on their expeditions of war by venerable prophetesses clad in long linen robes "most splendidly white." All Celtic histories and traditions also bear testimony to the consideration in which their women were held. That the ladies of China are respected and appreciated by their countrymen, I have no doubt, though their way of life is almost a closed book to us; but if the women who in Scandinavia worshipped Odin and Thor; who in Britain with golden sickles cut the sacred mistletoe from the boughs of the oak; who guarded the holy fires in the ancient shrines of Ireland, were treated with honour and consideration and took leading parts in the affairs of their people long before those people had learnt the higher truths of Christianity, why should it not be the same with their sisters who live where the noble teachings of Confucius and the great lessons of the Light of Asia are the professed guides of the nation? From the days of the beautiful and not overscrupulous Empress Wu, who for sixty-seven years exercised despotic sway over the empire, Chinese history makes mention of many distinguished and remarkable women, and, as far as one can judge, the position of women in China is superior to that they occupy in most Oriental lands; but in no Asiatic country is the status of women on a par with what it is where Teutonic and Celtic ideas preponderate; therefore we are justified in thinking that in many ways the lot of Chinese women might be ameliorated, and more interests and greater happiness might be introduced into their lives, while it is not a necessary corollary that Chinese women should adopt manners and customs peculiar to foreign races and to which by heredity and surroundings Oriental women must be unfitted. Echoes from the homes of China reach us from time to time of young

girls committing suicide to escape a distasteful marriage, of brides putting an end to an existence rendered intolerable by the tyranny of their mother-in-law ; that lead us to suppose that there are aspects of the life of Chinese women that are capable of improvement. "Comprendre," wrote a distinguished Frenchwoman, "c'est pardonner." To enable us to understand something more of the mode of life and thought of the women of China, and that they may obtain glimmers of light on the—to them—strange and weird ways and minds of their European sisters is, I take it, the object of this Conference, which may be the beginning of large efforts that I hope and trust will ultimately lead to greater mutual goodwill and friendship.

Treatment of Children.

By Miss MARY LATTIMORE, *Soochow.*

It is not easy for us women of the West, with our thoughts of childhood, in all its sweetness and beauty, our sacred memories of mother love with all its deep tenderness and sacrifice, and with our Savior's words concerning little children forever finding an answering echo in our hearts, to understand the treatment of their children by Chinese mothers.

In order to arrive at any sort of understanding we must call to mind a little the religion of these women. For we know that women the world over are deeply religious, clinging to their faith "beyond the forms of faith," and Chinese women are no exception.

We must remember that, whatever her form of religion, underneath all lies a firm belief in the spirit world, and a haunting fear that she and her children are constantly menaced by evil spirits or demons. Remembering this, many things which you know are done, but which perhaps you, like myself, have not always seen the reason for, become plain.

Women are usually very unwilling to talk on this subject with a foreigner, and it is only by listening and watching that one comes to understand. With the belief that she must protect her child from evil influences, how earnestly she tries every device known to deceive the spirits, and how pathetic every effort seems to us who would teach her of the Lover of little children. Let me call to your mind a few of the many ways a mother treats her child, and, with the thought I have given you uppermost, consider whether with the light she has she is not doing the best she can.

Hordes of spirits are supposed to attend on the birth of a child ; so red candles are lighted in the birth chamber, as for a wedding, and one

must be careful to say only good words. The occasion is a happy one, and the new comer must be greeted with joy, lest he become frightened. On the 30th day for a boy and the 40th for a girl the mother goes to the temple to offer incense, and afterwards is free to enter the homes of her friends. The baby's head is shaved on the 28th day for a boy and the 30th for a girl. At the feast which accompanies this ceremony good wishes are spoken and gifts offered.

When a child is a year old there is a feast, much finer usually for the boy. Again, at the tenth year, and so on, every ten years being counted a big birthday. The clothing of a child is full of significance, and would teach us much if we only knew to read the lesson. A baby's clothing is almost invariably made after the pattern of priest's garments. In some way this seems to insure the protection of the gods. A baby is decked out with all sorts of charms. The ornaments on the cap, consisting of "lucky" characters and an image of the "old man" who especially looks after children, are easy to understand. But when a baby's cap is decorated with a bit of lamp-wick fastened on with a darning-needle, the meaning is not so plain. Books of sacred writings are tied round a baby's waist and neck, especially if the child be ill.

I have never known just why this is done, but it may be because characters are considered holy. When a girl is betrothed her relatives proclaim the fact. The very cut of her hair tells whether she is of an age to be offered for marriage. There is no end to it, as you all know.

One fear of a mother seems to be that her child may be lured away by an evil spirit. Another that the child may prove to be only a spirit, come to stay for a little while. So the names given many children show an effort to make sure that the child will not leave them. I do not need to remind you. You have all heard of "Wang-tz," so called because his mother wrapped him in a fish-net, thinking that as a fish is caught in the net so would her baby be held. Or "Ko-tz," because he was put in the cooking pan, or "Chiün-tz," because he had a circle made round him with ashes, and so on. All because the mother hoped to keep the baby spirit with them. Of a part with this is the dressing of a boy in girl's clothes. If a woman has had two or three girls who have lived, the boy is put in girl's clothes, in the hope that he will follow his sister's good example and grow up. And the same if a woman has had boys and wishes her baby girl to live, the girl goes round like a small edition of her big brothers. Locks and chains are put round a child's neck or wrists, thereby preventing the spirit from leaving. Coats are made of pieces of cloth contributed by friends and acquaintances, looking like Joseph's coat of many colours.

Who of you have not seen a little child laid at the door to die? Sometimes outside, with the door shut and the family lamenting inside. This because they believe that in falling ill and dying the child they loved has proved to be but a hateful demon. It only came to torment the mother. So she must put it away and learn to hate what she has cherished, and she must take precautions or it may come again to torment her. For fear it may be reborn of her, she sometimes blacks the face of the dying, or just dead child, that it may not be able to find its way back again. Or a hand is cut off, or a finger, in the seeming belief that should it succeed in being reborn, it would be recognized. Do you wonder that they mourn without hope?

The looking for a child's soul is a common occurrence. A child falls ill, and it is decided that for some reason or other it has lost or dropped one of its souls, of which it is supposed to have three. Some one, usually the mother (for they say "a mother's voice reaches thousand and thousands of *li*") takes a lantern in one hand and a garment of the child's, or some favorite dainty in the other and goes out to the place where the child may have dropped his soul to look for it.

She moves the lantern all round, and up and down, at the same time calling the child. Often I have heard one woman calling, "Come, come home," and another answering, "I'm coming."

Finally the soul is supposed to come and follow them home.

That boys are more to be desired than girls is well known to you all. Why? There seem to me to be two reasons, which are after all but one.

1st. A boy always belongs to the family. A girl marries, leaves, and afterwards has no part in her parents' lives, not even wearing mourning for them.

2nd. The girls do not burn incense for their own family after marriage, and so have no part in the worship for the dead.

Because boys are wanted and girls are not there has come the fearful practice of female infanticide, which is too well known to need more than mention.

A very common practice is that of early disposing of the unwanted baby girl to some one wishing for a daughter-in-law. These little ones are brought up in their future husband's home, the family drudge.

With the discipline and government of the children you are all more or less familiar. A small boy early learns the importance of his position and rules his family absolutely. He has but to speak and all obey him. If he is "unwilling" the whole family waits till he is.

Nowhere is a mother more the slave of her child than in China. Indulged in every possible way, left to scream and cry when indulgence is denied, with no thought of teaching self-control, the child fights its way to manhood.

Considering all the problems which come to a Chinese mother in the treatment of her children, do we not long for the day when she shall realize more fully the duty she owes her children, and understand the teaching of the Christ who said : "Of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

GENERAL DISCUSSION.

Lady BLAKE :—In regard to the belief that spirits sometimes take a child's spirit in order to torment the mother, there is a similar belief in some parts of Ireland. Near my own birth place the country people think the fairies sometimes exchange fairy children for human babes. If a child falls ill the mother thinks fairies have been tampering with her cradle, and prays to be delivered from the changeling. A mother sometimes puts the child on a frying pan, believing that if a changeling, when it screams, the fairies will come and remove the baby and bring back the mother's own child.

Mrs. SHEFFIELD, Tungchow, near Peking :—We are not here to criticize ; we are here as students to collect facts about the social and home life of the people we want to help ; merely as sociologists. The study of the home life of the Chinese women comes very close home to us, for the home is our sphere, and this study comes close home to us as mothers, sisters, missionaries, and as lovers of humanity most of all. Infant life is the most impressionable, and it is shaped and molded by the mother. In England and America child life is a great study, and its importance is impressed upon all. It is a sadly impressive fact that child life in China is in the hands of an ignorant and superstitious womanhood. We must not make too broad generalizations from meager facts, but as a matter of fact the proportion of educated women is very small ; only about one Chinese woman in ten thousand can read. So the nation is nourished by ignorant mothers. This appeals to our pity. Physicians could speak more to the point here than I can, though I have worked for some years in a dispensary. The physical life of the child in this country is dwarfed by the treatment it receives. I want to give most hearty thanks to Mrs. Little for her noble efforts against that crying evil of foot-binding. It is one of the most cruel wrongs existent, and a crusade against it has our most hearty sympathy. The fact that Chinese mothers are totally ignorant of the laws of health, and of the rules of sanitation and hygiene, contributes to the dwarfing of child life and to infant mortality.

As to the child's mental life the Chinese have a theory that the child's mind does not begin to open very early. At seven years is quite early enough to begin to teach the child, and then he is not supposed to

understand anything of the characters he must memorize day by day. The teachers insist that the heart openings are not complete, and that the child cannot understand the meaning of what he studies until his physical development is further advanced. Thus early childhood in China is very barren, and the early years are allowed to go to waste. Allusion has been made to the lack of moral life in the homes, where child life is hardly begun.

And then there is so great sadness about the death of Chinese children. We all know how the death of a child in our own homes brings sadness when we have stood by their little bodies after the spirit went home to heaven, but we have the sweet hope of seeing our loved ones again; our little ones are calling us to the better land.

In China death is not only sad; it is hopeless. To have the little child turned into an enemy is monstrous. How the mothers beat the scarce dead bodies of their children, thinking they are demons, has already been told us. If these mothers did but know Christ they would have comfort in their sorrows. We can bring the love of Christ to them. I believe that after this great convulsion there are sure to be great opportunities for broader, deeper work for the women and children of China. We must bring to them the results of our Christianity, our experience, and not leave the poor struggling creatures alone to fill out the measure of sorrow for themselves. We may find it hard, but we can surely help our sisters, whose lives are so much harder, to find peace and joy in Christ Jesus. I believe they will rise by the light of Christianity to be among the best men and women of the world. I believe it will be our duty to bring to them the information necessary for the opening and development of the child's mind. Let us bring the best and fullest we can. Let us give the women lessons on motherhood, pre-natal motherhood, as well as later phases. Let us train the spirit as well as the body and mind. The results will be more than satisfying. Let us take hold of all the enlarged and widening possibilities of our work, expect wider sympathy and new power in pointing the Chinese to the heavenly life.

Mrs. T. RICHARD, formerly of Shansi, spoke on **FOUNDLING INSTITUTIONS** :—

These institutions are found in every great city. There is one in Shanghai native city, one near the Polytechnic, and, till recently, there was another at the corner of Honan and North Soochow Roads, where still may be seen, in the wall facing the creek under a small grated window, the drawer which received the infants, but which is now fastened,

so that it cannot be opened from outside as formerly. That building is now used for other charities.

I recently gathered the following items of information regarding these foundling institutions:—

1. Poor people who cannot afford to keep a newly-arrived baby, put it in the drawer in the wall of the institution.

2. One inside, hearing the opening and closing of the drawer, takes it in and puts it out to be nursed. The wet-nurse is paid 760 cash monthly from the funds of the institution; the institution provides clothing.

3. If the child should have a serious illness it is cared for in the institution and returned to its nurse when well again.

4. When the child is weaned, it is brought to the institution, and is one of three or four under the care of one woman.

5. Usually the children are adopted by kind people; the institution requiring security for good treatment. No charge is made for adoption.

6. The lame and blind are usually kept till they are grown up.

7. The expenses of such institutions are met by charitable contributions and by endowments; an annual report is rendered to the committee of the institute.

(The speaker shewed one such report for 1897).

We shall have more to say on other charities when we speak on "Social Customs" on Friday.

GENERAL DISCUSSION.

Dr. KILBORN, Szechuan, said:—There is some kindness of heart among the Chinese in the Far West. Chen-tu has an institution for children and one for old people.

Mrs. PRICE, Kia-shing:—I should like to add a word in regard to these institutions, which I learned from Christian women who had put their children into them before they became Christians. I knew five or six women who, before becoming Christians, had put their children into an orphanage. After they were Christians they were full of remorse for the sin of disposing of their children in such a way, and desired to recover them, so that they might be under Christian influence. They tried to identify and redeem their children, but in not one instance were they able to do so. They could find no trace of them. Probably the authorities, though they might have clues by which to trace the children, were not willing that they should be found, as in such event they might get into trouble with the owner of the girls. Probably they had become slaves or daughters-in-law. The children were put into the institution under a year old.

Mrs. RICHARD :—Here in Shanghai, if the name and address of the parents are left in the institution when the child is put in, they may take it out again when stress of poverty is over, if they desire to do so. The institution is not in connection with the government. The funds are supplied by the gentry and merchants.

A LADY asked :—Does anyone know of an instance of a mother becoming nurse for her own child after it is put into such an institution ? (No one answered.) In Hangchow there have been such cases. One woman said she had twice taken a baby to nurse and received 1,800 cash a month for it. The institution was very careful of the children. A doctor from the institution sees that the child is well and properly cared for.

Miss MITCHELL, Wuhu :—In company with a Bible woman, I have visited the orphanage in Wuhu, the expenses of which are from \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year. The attendants were very kind, showing us the institution and giving us information about the children. A large number of blind children are received, and for them there is a ready market, as they become the most successful fortune-tellers. The price for a girl is 200 cash. This institution has a room in which to receive the babies. By the door is a gong which the woman strikes after she has laid the child on a cushion. An attendant in the next room hears the sound of the gong and comes and takes the child. They do not know who brings the babies. I have a Bible woman who goes to the institution to tell the gospel to the women and the wet-nurses there. She finds them always willing to have her come, and they listen attentively. Those in authority place no obstacles in her way.

Mrs. TATUM, Shanghai, asked whether the work of carrying on these institutions is from disinterested motives or desire to heap up merit?

Lady BLAKE :—We cannot look into their hearts to see their motives.

Mrs. LITTLE :—When do they wash the baby? The first day, the first week, or month? Is there any rule about it?

Dr. KILBORN said that in Chen-tu the baby is washed for the first time the third day after birth.

Mrs. LITTLE :—Do they use soap?

Dr. KILBORN :—No, they do not use soap, but only warm water.

Mrs. POLLARD, Yunnan :—The body of the baby is rubbed with a raw egg.

Miss POSEY, Shanghai, gave an instance in the native city of Shanghai, where the child had not been washed, with the exception of the face, for three months. The mother was afraid it would take cold, and declared she did not know how to give it a bath. Miss Posey offered to teach her, and the first time she could not get off all the dirt. She offered to come the next week and try again, but when she came again, the mother had already washed the child, and every week after that the baby had a bath.

Mrs. GEO. PARKER :—In the north, in Kansu, and North Honan, the babies are not washed. A wad of cotton wool is dipped in oil and rubbed on the arms, legs, and stomach. It is so cold there in winter that the babies would freeze if washed. I tried to persuade some of them to wash their babies in warm weather, but they said no, it would make them sick. One woman, forty-seven years old, I tried to persuade to take a bath. To please me she consented to take the first bath in forty-seven years. When finished, to prove to me that the bath had been taken, she showed me the water, a little in a tin pan, not enough to wash her face properly. There is a saying in Kansu that a man never washes his feet unless he crosses a river. If he has any cash in his pocket he never washes at all.

Lady BLAKE asked why?

Mrs. GEO. PARKER :—Because, if he has cash he pays his way across, and doesn't need to get his feet wet.

Mrs. LITTLE :—Does this uncleanness cause sores? Are the dreadful sore heads due to dirt, or to disease only?

Dr. KILBORN :—Some are the result of dirt, some come from infection. The most are from both dirt and infection. Eczema is very common, and there are several different diseases of the scalp.

Dr. GLOSS :—In my clinic about a third of the patients are children, and a large proportion of them are suffering from sore-head, caused by uncleanness at the time of birth.

It was asked :—Do the women know the cause? And why are they unwilling to remove it?

Answered :—Yes, they know the cause, and many of them do, but in their cold houses and with the small quantity of water they have at command, is it any wonder they are lax in this particular? It is different in summer. In some places the baby is bathed the first day in hot water; then again on the 30th day.

The discussion was here closed.

Daughters-in-law.

By Miss EMMA SILVER, of *Shanghai*.

There is an irony of fate in giving me this subject, for in the few years that I have been in China, I have agonized over daughters-in-law, the marriage of our girls and their becoming daughters-in-law, so that I am sure I have over this subject gained an appreciable number of grey hairs in a short time. I have no theories on the subject, and if you can tell me how to reconcile mother-in-law and daughter-in-law so that they can live peaceably together, I shall be very glad.

The character for woman, doubled, means "intriguing," and this seems to be literally the case in many Chinese homes, where from the very beginning it is a contest between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law as to who shall be head. In theory it is the mother-in-law, but in fact the daughter-in-law does all she possibly can to win her husband over to her side. He has a hard time of it sometimes, for if he listens to his wife, his mother is indignant, and if he pleases his mother, the wife often suffers.

There is no other cause of so much unhappiness in Chinese homes as this compelling the daughter-in-law to live with her mother-in-law.

Moses said:—"These statutes the Lord has commanded us to observe for our good," but how different this custom of the Chinese, the observance of which brings so much misery upon the Chinese women! The command of our Lord that a man shall leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife, was not idly given, but for our good, as His commands always are. If Christianity changes this custom—the determination of the Chinese that the wife shall serve her mother-in-law—it will indeed bring peace, and to the women a little taste of heaven. It will take away much of the bitterness of their lot.

There are some Ruths in China, some daughters-in-law who willingly and obediently serve their mothers-in-law. It is not uncommon to find that a betrothed girl, if her fiancé dies, goes voluntarily to his home and serves his parents. She is then considered a model, and sometimes a tablet or arch is erected to the memory of such a one.

The theories of the Chinese are very beautiful, but actions are forced; there is nothing to make the heart glad or willing. Not knowing the fear of God, they have nothing but the fear of man, and this is not enough to restrain evil passions.

It is the boy's mother who provides him with a wife; it is her "sing-woo," or daughter-in-law, and she has charge of her in every way. So *mother-in-law* has become a synonym for all that is fierce and dreadful.

In America the mother-in-law is a subject for jests, and the man is supposed to bear all the trials she imposes, but in China the case is reversed, and it is the daughter-in-law who must bear all that her mother-in-law chooses to inflict.

This morning it has been mentioned that, in stress of poverty, children will sometimes be given to another family. It very often happens that a family cannot afford to bring up a daughter, so they give her to a family that want a daughter-in-law, or sell her for a very small amount, and thus the mother-in-law secures a daughter-in-law at a very small expense, often no more than her clothes, and food, and the trouble of rearing her and of binding her feet. This is called "yang-sing-voo," or rearing a daughter-in-law. I often think these poor little girls thus disposed of must feel as Oliver Twist did, when he said he must eat a great deal of salt as he had to work so hard and so long to earn it. It takes so much work to earn their living in the mother-in-law's home. Sometimes the girls are happy, more often they are not, and there is no lot so bitter as that of being a daughter-in-law, for the mother-in-law has not the love nor patience of the girl's own mother, and looking upon the affair as a mere matter of business is, of course, less tender. There are instances of real cruelty. In foot-binding the mother-in-law is without pity, but when it comes to binding feet, all are cruel. Sometimes a daughter-in-law is beaten to death. The angry scoldings are hard to bear. It has been said, "Hard words break no bones," but that is no comfort, for broken hearts are longer in healing than broken bones. A beating may be preferable to a scolding. The most unfortunate part of this procuring a small girl and bringing her up for a boy's wife is that he may not be attracted nor attached to her when he grows up, and find his pleasure in going out to other women.

Can anyone give an instance of a happy married life under such conditions?

On the marriage day this girl, brought up in her mother-in-law's home, is dressed as a bride, and if the family have money, the flowery chair is called; she is put into it and carried round a few streets and brought back again; a feast is made, and the regular wedding ceremonies gone through. Her own family have nothing to do with the wedding, though sometimes her mother is notified by presents that her daughter is married.

Custom rules everything—dress, exchange of presents, and marriage ceremonies—for those girls who are reared in their own homes and are carried in the bridal chair on their wedding day to the home of their husband's parents. Of course there must be an exchange of presents between the families of the bride and groom. When the girl is of a

proper age to be married the relatives begin to make ready some time before the appointed time, and there is the passing of presents back and forth. The bride must send a present of shoes to her mother-in-law. This is supposed to be of her own free will, but we might ask how does she know the size to make them? As a matter of fact the mother-in-law sends a pattern—really asks for the shoes.

The chief or most important article the bride takes to her new home is the article to be used at the birth of a child. In case the bride has been reared in the home of her mother-in-law, her own mother is notified by presents that the actual marriage is to take place, when she sends to her daughter this article. On arrival at the husband's home the bride must pay her respects to the parents and grandparents of her husband, whether living or dead. The father and mother of the bridegroom are seated, and the bridal pair kneel before them. The mother-in-law presents the bride with money. The next morning the bride must go to her mother-in-law's room and offer her a cup of tea, or some fruit, prepared by her servant, or by herself. This is done for three or five days, three months, or even five years, according to the strictness with which the mother-in-law insists upon the observance of custom. A Ningpo bride must offer these attentions to all her husband's relatives for three New Years. If she does not, they may tease her as on her wedding day, saying she is still a bride and does not know the duties of a wife.

After the wedding is over the daughter-in-law must walk very carefully and adjust herself to the rules of the house. She no longer belongs to her own family, and in the new home must do a daughter's work and have a daughter's responsibilities as well as those of a wife. When guests come she must bring the tea and offer it, and so in other things she must do the greater part of the work. The daughter is considered a guest, for she will soon leave. It is the daughter-in-law who must do all the *heavy* work. In sickness the mother-in-law is not bound to do anything for her daughter-in-law, but as a rule she will help her, not because she loves her (though she may love her, for Chinese hearts are something like ours) but because were she to die there would be the expense of a coffin and burial, and the trouble and expense of getting another wife. So she thriftily tries to prevent needless outlay.

The bride cannot return to her own mother's home for several months. Usually she goes when she can prepare her summer clothes, for these she is expected to bring back with her, as the wadded ones were the ones brought on the occasion of the wedding. At that time, too, she makes shoes for all the family. The visit is not of definite length. Sometimes she stays till the mother-in-law sends for her. One of the hardest things for her

is that she has no right to help her own parents. She cannot bring them to her husband's home, however much they may need help and kindness.

Sometimes her own mother may live with her, but this out of the kindness of the husband's heart. Her mother has no claim on them, and it is not a common thing among the Chinese to find the woman's mother living with her daughter and son-in-law.

Mrs. GEORGE PARKER (Chinese), *Kan-su*.

I would speak for Central China—Honan and Hupeh. Speaking of the murder of infants there, if the parents are wealthy, they will only keep two daughters, for it is so expensive to bring them up, and when they are married, it costs such a lot! So the girls, after the first two, are usually drowned. In Tengchow, Honan, the children are also drowned.

When a girl is married her mother gives her three pounds of wadding. This is her capital. She can make clothes, bedding, anything she chooses out of this three pounds of wadding. If she wants anything more, the mother says, "What, have you not enough! I gave you some capital! Three pounds of wadding!" It is far too expensive to keep girls who require such a large dowry, so most of them are killed.

The men there are cruel. They steal, plunder, murder—have no sort of conscience. The people say they partake of the nature of the earth. They inherit this evil nature from the earth. But I tell them, "No. God made the earth, and made it good. Your wickedness comes from your own mother." Years ago all the daughters were killed. The authorities, coming and seeing a man lying murdered in the road, find no one on whom to lay the guilt. At some distance are the peaceful farmers who, when asked, say they have seen no one and heard nothing. All the time they themselves are the robber-murderers! They have their weapons concealed, and immediately after committing the crime reassume their farmer's clothes and duties until the trouble is passed. Ah, yes, they are all peaceful people, quiet farmers—these children of cruel mothers!

A mother murdered four daughters. Afterwards she became a Christian, and came and sat down on the ground in front of my house and mourned for those drowned children. "If I had known the Lord I would not have done it!" she said. "Will He require their blood at my hand?"

So many girls are killed in this part that the young men have to go away to get their wives. There are not enough near home.

I lived for ten years in Chu-chow and Lan-cheo. There is a saying there, if you have ten daughters you are very well off, for you can sell them and you will get rich. They bring a very high price in consequence of the child murder that goes on not very far away, for in Honan the girls are scarce; some cannot get wives, as the girls are nearly all killed.

There is much cruelty to children. I will give my own experience. Our landlord had a cousin twelve years old. She was nothing but skin and bone. She was lame, not being able to move more than two inches at a time, yet she was obliged to wash, sweep, dust, and do all sorts of hard work for her aunt. In her wadded clothes the child weighed scarcely thirty-six pounds. We called in the gentry, and in their presence weighed her, convicted the man of cruelty, and took charge of the starved, frozen girl. When her feet had been bound, it was so carelessly done that the toes fell off; half the heel was gone, and the feet were in such a bad state that anyone would be justified in leaving the room she was in, because of the horrid smell. After five months of humane treatment the girl was happy, hearty, and healthy, running about as girls of her age should. Kind deeds mean the emptying of the pocket, but it was done for Christ's sake.

A second instance is that of the daughter-in-law of a neighbour. The women of the interior seem more cruel than those in the ports, and this mother-in-law was no exception. Her daughter-in-law had been under her for twenty out of her twenty-seven years, and was thin and stupid from the treatment she had received. She was beaten every day. One day she jumped into the well, which was deep, but the neighbours helped get her out before she managed to drown. But instead of being kind to her, they put her to bed and beat her more fearfully than ever. The mother-in-law took a large stick and used it freely, and pinched the flesh of the poor girl in a frightful way. I came in and told them, "If you don't want the girl, give her to me." But they would not do it. After a time the girl, with the help of her friends, ran away, and would not come back. At last a compromise was made, and the girl, separated now from her mother-in-law, is happy.

The third instance is that of a girl whose husband died and whose step-mother-in-law treated her as a slave. She tried to kill her and then to sell her, but could not accomplish her intention. At last she thought of a plan.

She would send the girl home on a visit to her mother. On the way she would manage to have the girl stolen and sold. Then she would

wait awhile and send to her mother's house for the girl, and when, as of course would be the case, the girl was not produced, she would accuse the mother of having betrothed the girl again and extort more money out of her. This plan was found out and told to the girl's mother in a round-about way, and the girl was saved.

In the fourth case the mother-in-law was good, but the father-in-law was very cruel. The daughter-in-law, in consequence, jumped down the well, which was tremendously deep, but she was dragged out. She was about thirty years old, and only six when she left her own home. She tried to drown herself in the river, after a severe beating. Finally the parents-in-law turned her out of doors to make her beg. They would give her nothing, and treated her shamefully. After fourteen days we found her, and 300 cash were paid for her. She is now provided for.

The fifth case is that of a girl of twenty-four. Her own mother came to see me, thinking that as I had helped some I could help all. The girl was dreadfully bruised, and had been driven out to beg, no food being given her. I asked, "Cannot your own relatives help you?" They told me that ten relations had come to demand justice, but had been accused of making a disturbance; their work was taken away from them and themselves put in prison till they should pay so much money. I could do nothing in this case.

There are many opium suicides, because of the bitterness of life. After one daughter-in-law died in this way, her relatives came, and in revenge, smashed everything in the house. Few care to undergo this, so efforts are generally made to save the girl. Some daughters-in-law are very troublesome.

Mrs. J. L. STUART, of *Hangchow*.

I would make a plea for the mother-in-law. I know it is the unpopular side, but I have known a number of good mothers-in-law, and my sympathies have been most heartily enlisted on their behalf. These young, undisciplined girls come into their homes sometimes filled with prejudice against their future relations and disturb the peace of the whole household. If the younger woman be the stronger character of the two, she soon asserts herself, and if she wins the husband to her side, then the older people have to "eat a good deal of bitterness."

I recall the case of a woman who called me into her home a number of times when I was passing by to retail her troubles with her daughter-in-law. She had professed some interest in Christianity in the past, and was willing to be instructed; but she now informed me that she had no heart for anything since her son's marriage. For this only child

they had expended something over one hundred dollars upon a wife, and they hoped they were getting a treasure for him and a great comfort themselves. The boy was only sixteen years of age when the ceremony was performed, and the girl being two years older, very soon began to "despise his youth" and to show in every way that she cared neither for the husband nor his parents. When the older people tried to insist upon the performance of her duties as daughter-in-law, she ran away to her own home, and no persuasions or threats could induce her to come back. There was nothing they really dreaded more than having her come back, and yet they could not afford to lose the money spent on her. If the bride's family had been willing to return the money, or even a part of it, to go towards the purchase of a new wife, the husband's family would gladly have relinquished all share in the girl; but this the others utterly refused to do, and so they were left without money and daughter-in-law. She appealed to me for help out of the difficulty, promising to join the "Jesus Church" and bring all her family, if we could only alleviate this domestic trouble. I felt very sorry for her, but could give her no help.

Another case was that of a daughter-in-law recently brought in the "flowery chair" with all the accompaniments of a country wedding, which means three days' feasting and the expenditure of a lot of money. As soon as things had settled down a little, the new daughter-in-law began to carry on in a most unbecoming manner. She refused to perform any of the duties expected of her, or recognize her husband's relations. When force was used, she resisted, even to clawing the mother-in-law until the blood came, and even using a knife on her husband. When I saw her, she looked like a little demon, and it is needless to say that I was utterly powerless to help. They said that she was put up to all this by her own family, who wished her to behave so badly that they would send her back to her home, and they could sell her to some one else.

These may be extreme cases, but they show how unfair to both sides is the plan of getting a wife through a "go-between." Those used for this purpose are notoriously untrustworthy, and for sufficient recompense will palm off any kind of girl or boy on unsuspecting parties who have no way of finding out definitely, until the wedding takes place, what kind of a bargain they have made. Then the use of money is such a temptation to those who are unscrupulous. So far as I have been able to observe among the country people (the well-to-do farming class, where my work has been for several years past) I should say that the mothers-in-law have a great risk to run in providing a wife for their sons, and often suffer a great deal at the hands of these young women who are looked forward to

as such a comfort in the place of their own daughters, whom they are forced to give up early in life to go into other homes.

Christian love is the great thing wanted in all these homes, and only that will make bearable a family life which contains so many elements of discord. When we can once introduce this love as the first thing in the formation of the marriage relation, and then in the hearts of both the elder and younger members, we shall see a great diminution of the evils of which we now complain.

GENERAL DISCUSSION.

Miss SILVER said :—In the case mentioned by Mrs. Stuart, where the bride would not kneel, I doubt whether she understood the meaning of the Christian ceremony. She probably thought she would not yield that point, for the reason that in the Chinese ceremony, when the bride and groom both kneel, the one that kneels first it is said will be the hen-pecked one. They sometimes stand a long time, with the attendants pulling at their garments to force them to their knees; neither one willing to be the first. The bride goes to her husband's home armed to the teeth to resist everything, and possibly that girl refused to kneel lest she be always subservient. This attitude of the bride is a fruitful cause of discord and unhappiness between her and her mother-in-law, as well as her husband.

Dr. KILBORN, Chen-tu, Szechuen :—The little I have to say on the subject applies directly to the city of Chen-tu. I know from experience and from what I have learned from the women that daughters-in-law, as a rule, are badly treated. I must say that I have very little sympathy with the mother-in-law. She has the choosing of the girl. The daughter-in-law comes to her husband's home with her heart filled with prejudice, intending to resent and resist everything. If the mother-in-law would be kind, love would take the place of this resentment, but instead the daughter-in-law is ill-treated and reviled, made to do hard work, and so badly treated that many are driven to commit suicide; the methods in Chen-tu being, most commonly, opium, hanging, drowning, cutting the throat, and drinking lye (water mixed with wood ashes), in the order mentioned.

I would say a few words, if I may be allowed, of the medical treatment of these girls during illness, especially during pregnancy. As has been said the girls are cruelly treated from the time they enter their husbands' homes, but when they become pregnant there is a change for the better. To be sure, they still have to work hard, but not so hard as before, for the possible advent of a son is a strong reason for treating

the expectant mother better. I have been told so by the girls themselves. I will describe a case which I met in my practice. I was called to go across the city at dusk to a poor house, where I found a girl of only about seventeen sitting on the edge of the bed supported by two women. She had been in labour for five days, and was in a most pitiable condition. The pulse was scarcely perceptible, and I saw the case was hopeless, though the child was still living. I was begged not to mind the mother, but to save the child. The parts were gangrenous, and I could do nothing for the poor girl, and while we were talking she died. The woman is always confined sitting up, propped up with cushions, or supported by other women. She is not allowed to lie down for three days. Sometimes she has to get up after the first day and go about her work. But she does not go out of the house for a month, nor to the temple, for if an unclean woman were to go before the gods before forty days were passed, the people would be angry and stay away from the temple. I believe this also applies in the port of Shanghai. Let us help the women to better medical service and educate them that they may help their sisters.

Mrs. LITTLE:—Is it out of unkindness the women are made to sit up? Propping them with cushions seems to indicate kindness.

Dr. KILBORN:—No, I think it is ignorance. They are afraid the discharges will flow back into the system and poison it, but the custom is not meant unkindly.

Mrs. POLLARD, Yünnan:—With us, in Yünnan, the idea of setting up on the edge of the bed seems to be that the bedding may not be soiled, also that the child may fall to the ground as soon as it is born. They have a superstition that the child *must* touch the ground, and never speak of it as being born, but of falling to the ground, “shia-ti.”

Miss FRENCH, Hangchow:—In such cases I find that the friends do not care so much for the mother's life as for that of the child. They wish the child saved at all costs. Another wife can be gotten, but the child, if a boy, is highly valued. In one case, similar to that told by Dr. Kilborn, the mother was a mere child of sixteen years; the baby unable to be born. When I arrived, the father, mother, and husband all begged me, on their knees, to take away the child with instruments—‘never mind the mother.’ I saw the case was hopeless and told them so, but they still begged to have the child taken. The reason was not to save the mother, nor the child even, but they didn't want the mother to go to Hades in such a condition, for they believe she would continue in such plight forever and suffer extra torments.

Dr. HOAG, Chinkiang :—I think this last explanation is correct. In one case the people locked the physician and helpers in the house, and refused to let them go until the child should be delivered. They say, if the mother dies, we will not blame you at all. They are determined to save the woman from wandering forever in a "sea of blood" which, according to their superstition, will be her fate if she so enters Hades.

It being now twelve o'clock Miss Murray, of Yangchow, closed with prayer.



SECOND DAY.

Wednesday, November 21st.

Lady Blake at 10 a.m. took the chair and called on Miss Butler, of the Friends Mission, to open with prayer.

This first Paper for the day was then read:—

The Betrothal of Young Children and Infants.

By Miss CULVEEWELL, of Szechuan.

This cruel form of bondage is only to be found in semi-civilised and un-Christian countries. It is a custom of very old standing and—as far as one can gather—universally practised in the Chinese empire: a selfish, cruel, mischievous custom,

Let us consider some causes and evil results of these early betrothals: First, Causes. There may be many, but there are three great causes which influence Chinese mothers to part with their little daughters: 1. Custom. 2. Superstition. 3. Convenience.

CUSTOM.

There is no nation more in bondage to custom, "Kuei-chu," than China. The supreme cause of child betrothal in China is Kuei-chu, or custom. The Chinese know from experience and will often own that it is an unhappy and frequently very sorrowful arrangement, yet for this one great reason—custom—they must and will betroth their infants. I was once invited to the betrothal feast of a little boy who could only just walk—the little girl was also an infant. I tried to persuade the parents to wait till the boy was older—but no, they said, it is the custom, unless people are too poor. We don't want our neighbours to be saying we are too poor to betroth our boy. So they went through with it, though in that same valley they had an object lesson of the sorrow and folly of infant betrothal, in a family of a tailor and farmer whose bright, healthy, only son was obliged to marry an idiot girl, who was so hopelessly demented that she could neither dress nor feed herself. This sorrowful object lesson was not reason enough to deter other parents from the custom of child betrothal.

SUPERSTITION.

In all matters of importance in China the tyrannous fortune-teller, or "swan-ming-tih," is consulted, and no betrothal in China is contracted without the aid of a "swan-ming-tih." In fact it is often at his suggestion

that these betrothals take place on a certain date. These fortune-tellers are a horde of cunning deceivers, yet the Chinese are in bondage under them; these men tell fortunes in a way which will best fill their own pockets, regardless of the disastrous effects upon the victims of their prophecies.

I will quote an instance of this. This is a perfectly true story, got from missionaries living in the city of I-yang, Kiangsi. There is a prosperous family living there, named Siao, who have a medicine shop. They had one little daughter, who was a great pet in the home. Six years ago, when the girl was four years old, a little son was born to the family, which was a cause of great joy; however, when he was but a few weeks old—according to heathen custom—the fortune-teller was called in to tell the baby boy's fortune. This man said the baby would die unless his four-year old little sister were betrothed away. So the family called in the "mei-un," middle woman, who found a school teacher who was willing to have this little girl betrothed to his son, and the betrothal was completed. But the parents were unwilling to part with their little daughter until she was of a marriageable age. Before that time came, the teacher proved to be a thoroughly bad man, and his son grew up in his steps—gambling and opium-smoking, and fast going to ruin. In the meantime the fortune-teller became a Christian, and the matter of the way he had deceived the Siao family weighed upon his conscience. He went and confessed to the Siao family that what he had said about the little boy, that he would die unless his sister were immediately betrothed, was entirely false. This greatly distressed the parents, and it was with great difficulty that the betrothal was broken off.

This story is told to shew the power of superstition and how it affects betrothals.

CONSEQUENCE.

Amongst the poorer classes in China this doubtless is a strong cause of child betrothal. This embraces various reasons, such as debt in the family, adverse circumstances, death of the father, or of both parents. Any of these troubles will lead a Chinese mother to part with her little daughter.

On the other hand, a woman will often arrange for her son's engagement, and the little daughter-in-law is brought to her mother-in-law's house as soon as she is old enough to work, there to be the maid of all work, the drudge and slave to her future husband's family.

I listened to two ladies conversing in my house: one, the mother of five sons and wife of the leading scholar in our city of Kuang-wan, said: "Yes! I am going to get my daughter-in-law into the house.

You see a daughter-in-law is no more expense than a servant, and if I curse or beat my servant she leaves, but a daughter-in-law you can beat and get obedience from, and your work will be done as you wish it." The other lady replied, "Just so! Just so! I am thinking of getting a daughter-in-law, too. I then shall live at ease."

RESULTS.

Evil Results of Infant Betrothal.—I have already given you two instances; one the farmer whose son was compelled to marry an idiot girl, and the Siao family. Another case is a very sorrowful one, where the children were betrothed very young. The man became an utter rogue and gambler, living on the streets; the girl, the youngest and pet of the family—her people were farmers—grew to be a very sweet, beautiful, intelligent girl; her poor old mother's heart broke at the thought of giving her over to the wicked family, who would doubtless sell her for a good price to raise money. The girl's mother tried many ways to get the betrothal reversed, but not the man said, dead or alive he would have her, and there was no law to prevent it, for the girl's mother was not rich enough to carry the matter through. The old mother died of a broken heart, and the girl tried to commit suicide by opium poisoning, then by throwing herself into the river. She was saved by her relatives and sent to her husband's house, there to experience such cruelties as you and I know nothing about.

Did time permit I could tell you many such stories, but enough. I am sure that you and I agree that these early betrothals are a cruel bondage, a crying evil that we who know the freedom of Christian countries, and comfort of love, all long to see changed.

In old days it was Jesus Christ who raised woman from her down-trodden condition, and to-day *His* power and grace alone can change sorrow and suffering into love, joy and peace.

By Mrs. HAWKS POTT (Chinese), *Shanghai*.

As to the prevalence of betrothals in infancy you will find that it is more common among the poorer people than among the wealthy. At least such has been my experience.

It does undoubtedly exist to a certain extent among the rich, for we sometimes come across instances where intimate friends betroth their baby children, or cases where children who are cousins are betrothed. The reason for these matches is because the families concerned are well acquainted with one another, and are desirous of keeping up this intimacy. They also have a vague idea that the son of a respectable father will turn out to be like him, and so the family of the baby girl have confidence in arranging what they believe will turn out to be a good match. Moreover

they look forward to the boy inheriting his father's wealth, and so feel sure their daughter will be well provided for.

In cases where these betrothals are made in wealthy families, if the boy should die a short time previous to the time of the marriage the girl would consider herself a widow, and would go over to the family of her intended husband. A marriage ceremony is often performed with the spirit of the deceased husband. The dead husband is represented by the tablet which is afterwards to be placed in the ancestral hall, and at the time of the ceremony the tablet is carried by some female relative.

The whole marriage is performed exactly as if the bridegroom were living. On the third day after the marriage the bride puts on mourning and settles down as a widow for life. She adopts a son to carry on the family name and the ancestral worship.

A few years ago, a case like that I have described occurred here in Shanghai.

I have already said these betrothals in infancy take place more frequently among the poor. The reason for this is a desire for economy. When babies are betrothed it only costs the family of the boy two dollars, and if the match should be made when children are older, it would be very much more expensive, for then a great number of betrothal presents would have to be provided.

If any misfortune should happen to the family of the girl, as for instance if her parents should die or become very poor, the boy's family, if they desire to do so, have the right to claim the girl, and then she is brought up in the family of her future husband, and is known by the name of the "little daughter-in-law." Very often she is treated very cruelly and is always looked down upon. Let me give you an instance which has occurred in my own experience.

In the village outside of the gate of our compound a little girl, six years old, whose father had died and whose mother had remarried, was betrothed by her grandfather to a boy in another family, as there was no one to take care of the child, and the grandfather wished to settle her for life; she was sent over, after the betrothal had taken place, to live in the family of her future husband.

She lived there for two or three months and was treated with awful cruelty by her future mother-in-law. She had no bed to sleep on. She was beaten repeatedly, and at one time struck on the face with a Chinese steelyard, the hook of which pierced her face near the eye. Her whole body was bruised with the knocks she received.

This ill-treatment was discovered by her grandfather when the child was paying him a visit, and the pitiful story in this way came to our ears. The grandfather, although he knew the child was being so grossly

abused, yet felt bound, according to custom, to send the child back to her tormentors. I went out to the village to investigate, and found out who was the go-between. Before my appearance he ran away, leaving his mother to arrange matters with me.

I insisted upon being led to the house of the family who were treating the child so badly, and in company with another lady was taken there by the old woman. Upon arriving we were surrounded by a crowd of villagers, anxious to know what was the matter. I told them, you say we Christian people like to do good things, and to-day we have come to do "hau-z," a charitable act. I explained to them the whole story, and all the time unknown to me; the mother-in-law was sitting behind me spinning. When I said I want to get hold of that woman, she got up and ran away, and so I knew *that* was the woman. I tried to follow her, but she bolted the door and went out of the house the back way.

Then I told the mother of the go-between that I was willing to pay what had been spent on the girl if she could be set free, and offered two dollars. They said this time it cost a little more than two dollars. Altogether ten dollars were spent on the betrothal, six for the betrothal itself and four for a feast for the go-betweens. I said, I will pay the ten dollars if you will write out a paper releasing the child. If you don't do it, I will report the matter to the magistrate. This brought them to terms, and an arrangement was made by which the child was set free and taken into our orphanage.

This is a sample of innumerable cases which must be constantly occurring.

In regard to betrothals taking place at a later age, I need not speak, for that subject comes up more properly under marriage customs. The Chinese also have a saying that "marriages are made in heaven," and the idea that the wishes of those to be betrothed should be consulted, is entirely foreign to the Chinese way of thinking.

All customs of this kind can only be changed gradually with the increase of civilization.

The Western idea of woman's position, due very largely to the teachings of the Christian religion, differs from the Chinese idea as far as the East is from the West, and as much as day from night.

Only by the spread of the new ideas as to the dignity of womanhood can we ever hope to change the customs of China. But little can be accomplished by attacking these customs from the outside. We must implant new ideas, and as these take root and grow, the evil customs will then slowly wither and die away.

[Mrs. Hawks Pott had intended to be with us each day of the Conference, when we hoped she would give us the benefit of her wide

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experience on several of the subjects, but the death of a sister happening that week prevented her attendance on the other days, much to the disappointment of the committee, who sincerely tender their sympathy in the sad bereavement.—Ed.]

GENERAL DISCUSSION.

Miss HOWE, Kiukiang:—A friend of mine said to me, a short time ago, "I don't want to have anything more to do with betrothals." I should not blame you if you do not want to *hear* anything more about them; and I will give you only one case with which we had to come in contact. It is different from any case of which the other ladies have told.

When we were first trying to open a school for girls in Kiukiang we had difficulty in getting teachers, and scoured the country in search of women who were sufficiently educated to teach. We succeeded in finding one woman who had a fairly good education, and she taught in the school for about a year. Then she brought a little girl about fifteen days old into her family as daughter-in-law. We were surprised, for she had no son; all her children having died. Only a few months afterward she gave birth to a daughter. What was to become of the daughter-in-law? She was placed in my hands, and I brought her up and educated her. While still in her teens came the question of betrothal. I had said I would never have anything to do with betrothing a girl, if I could help it; but a suitor appeared for the girl, the fifth son in a family, the mother of which was not living. But the four elder brothers were married, and she would have four sisters-in-law above her, perhaps worse than one mother-in-law. I had determined that the only way I could betroth the girl would be to an orphan son, because I did not like a mother-in-law. What was I to do in this case with four instead of one to contend against? The young man seemed a suitable person and the young woman seemed willing.

One can never ask a girl right out, for it would be improper, but I told her that such and such an one was asking for her, and if she were unwilling she could say, "No," but if inclined to accept, silence would give consent. Finally an idea came to me, which I am sure will shock our Chinese sisters who may be present. I feel that as Christians we should impress upon the Chinese the principle of dividing the family when the young people are married. So I said to the young man, "Divide the family; do not go and live with your four brothers and I will consent to the betrothal." Divide the family! What is there in China equal to dividing the family except breaking off the betrothal? And yet divide the family is just what our Saviour taught, and until the family

is divided none of the evils resulting from a girl's marrying the whole family can be rectified. A man must leave his father and mother—his whole family—for his wife. We must obey this command as well as the others.

The outcome of my daring experiment was this. The young man had traveled all the way to Kiukiang to see about getting his wife. Would his father be willing, would the rest of the family be willing to consent to the stipulation I had made? What would the elder brothers say? I helped him with a paper of my own composition. It was not a legal document, but was designed to give assistance to the young woman in case of trouble.

The couple were married and are living happily. They are well known to some of you and are now in Shanghai. He was sent to the Y. M. C. A. Convention in Paris a few years ago. This was the first I had to do with early betrothals.

(In answer to a question): I haven't the paper here this morning. I had almost decided to bring it, but thought reading it would take up too much time. However, I have it at home, and any one can see it who may be interested.

Dr. FERN, Soochow:—In Soochow a case was brought to the hospital, an idiot girl. I found she was betrothed to a neighbor's son. I asked how the mother came to betroth her son to an idiot girl. She and her neighbor were both very poor, were pregnant at the same time, and agreed that if their children were boy and girl they should marry, and thus they were betrothed before birth, at a cost of only 50 cents.

Mrs. POLLARD, Yunnan:—In our part of Yunnan early betrothals are common, but more because of poverty than custom. Early betrothals are economical, for girls are cheaper the younger they are. Another reason: Mrs. Sheffield has said the child is in the hands of an ignorant woman. These ignorant mothers are unable to control their boys after they get to be about 14, 15, 16, so they betroth them, thinking it will be a check upon them. If the son has a wife he will feel more responsibility, and will be less wild, and so the mother gets a wife for her boy. Then, too, it is to preserve the virtue of the girl that an early betrothal is made. When she reaches fourteen or fifteen the mother becomes uneasy about her, and gets her married in order to preserve her virtue. We find among the better class the girls are not betrothed early. Many are unmarried at the age of twenty or twenty-one years.

Formerly they did not allow the family of the girl to see the intended husband. Now the father insists on seeing the young man. I know

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of a T'ai-t'ai who sent her only son twenty miles to see the family of the girl to whom he was to be betrothed.

Mrs. LITTLE :—Does not the girl see him ?

Mrs. POLLARD :—Often she does. In fact I may say she is pretty sure to get a peep at him.

Miss JEWELL, Foochow :—There is a family near Foochow which comes from a very rough district. It is a Christian family, but that they are not perfect is shewn by the fact that the mother gave her eight months' old baby to be the daughter-in-law in a heathen family. The families were friends, and poverty made the Christian woman take the step. She wished to go out as a nurse, and had no one with whom to leave her baby. The boy died. The mother-in-law found that the girl was to be betrothed again, and stole off, two miles to her friend's house, to beg the mother to buy her daughter back for a small sum, for the father-in-law would never give her back. The mother came to me and begged for help. I said, "This is your own affair." She said they were very sorry because they gave their little girl away, and repented. Well, that child came into my hands for the sum of \$4.00 Mexican (I hope the other family doesn't know of my investment). The parents have their daughter back, and all are satisfied.

In another Christian family was a son, who, before they became Christians, had been betrothed by his parents very young. He was sent to our Anglo-Chinese College and received a very good education. Shortly after he entered, two girls were brought to our school who, he said, were his sisters. But we were puzzled at the contrast between them. One was bright, well dressed, healthy ; the other stupid, not so well clothed and poorly. She seemed cowed and unattractive. We soon found that one was daughter, the other daughter-in-law. That made the difference. It seems hard for this to be an instance in a Christian family, but we must remember that though the father was an educated man, his wife was not, and in fact was hardly "Christian," as she had had very little opportunity to be taught. Some time after the girls came to school, the daughter-in-law had to go home, because the mother-in-law was ill and must have some help. She came back again, but soon had to return to the home, for the mother-in-law was again in need of some one to help her. Meanwhile the daughter remained at school and was being well educated. The son was also doing well, and the thought that he must marry the poor, uneducated drudge, instead of a woman suited to him, was a sad one. So I appealed to the young man himself, after a vain endeavour to make the parents see the case as we did. I hope I shall

never see another such look as came on the young man's face. "It is not my affair," he said, "ask my father." I could not blame him, but I dared not approve, when he added, "I'll NEVER marry that girl." He did not marry her. I am glad we have young men who will show voluntarily that the parents take an unwarrantable liberty in matters that belong to their sons alone. I am glad the parents are learning to consult the young people more. There is nothing for it but to divide the family. There are divisions and divisions and none worse than where there is no dividing. We have a sturdy man in our conference who divided his family because he would not have quarelling among his daughters-in-law.

Girl Slavery in China.

By Dr. IDA KAHN (Chinese), *Kiukiang*.

" Shall tongues be mute, when deeds are wrought
Which well might shame extremest hell?
Shall freemen lock the indignant thought?
Shall Pity's bosom cease to swell?
Shall Honor bleed?—shall Truth succumb?
Shall pen, and press, and soul be dumb?"

This is the question before us to-day. I am not here to give a philosophical talk about slavery, and I should not know how to go about it. It is a surprise to me that any question as to the iniquity of slavery in general yet stalks abroad in the approaching dawn of the twentieth century. I know there are those who hold to the principle, especially in cases of races they presume to deem essentially different and inferior to their own. I rejoice to believe that the number of this class of persons is decreasing. Our subject to-day does not address itself to them. We speak rather to those who have not had much contact with slavery in China. They perhaps deem it almost too trivial a matter to discuss at this present. I can testify that it does exist, and that alas! to an appalling extent. So far as my observation goes the girls of China furnish the victims and the boys but very seldom. A cry is suppressed until it is only a groan, or it would be heard from the millions of oppressed ones throughout the length and breadth of this land. How can we help feeling that it is praying us to hasten to their deliverance and we dare not turn indifferently aside.

True, the little slaves are not often obtruded upon your notice. You may gaze up and down all the streets without seeing one. Should you chance to be waited upon by one in a wealthy friend's home your mental reservation might be that the poor girl had fallen upon rather easy lines. However, come with me to the back streets and alleys of the tenement houses—even here in the Model Settlement—and you will see

everywhere the patient little ones toiling with all their might—at least with all the might the mistresses can succeed in getting from them—at their daily tasks of sweeping, washing, scouring, and what not. Then let us drive through Foochow Road and you will see the slave girls in their gilded cages ; but does the sight pain you less than the previous one ?

Who are the people that use slaves in China ? I may answer, the rich people who regard them as indispensable as so many pieces of furniture. Accordingly they furnish them to each daughter of the house in quantity and quality corresponding to the length of the family purse. The daughter carries them to her future home as part of her dowry. If the slave girl should be ugly-looking and awkward, as she has every reason to be, then the more blows and scolding will be her lot. Such a steady course of treatment for years will not tend to brighten her intellect and sweeten her temper ; so that she will almost invariably become stupid and sullen. On the contrary the menial may be bright and pretty, and then alas ! she will doubtless find favor in the eyes of the master and perhaps become peer with the rich man's daughter.

How can the poor thing attempt to escape from any of the sorrows of her lot without recourse to treachery and deceit ?

The middle classes use the slave girls because they cannot afford to have servants, and the poor people use them as a means of getting rich.

Shall I say it ? Some of our Christian people keep slave girls. I think they hardly realize the wrong involved. I may add that they do endeavor to ameliorate their condition in many ways.

So the system of slavery permeates our social fabric, and how much it detracts from the social virtues we may well imagine. I need not moralize upon the influence of it all, upon the character of the mistress and her children, boys and girls. If slavery could produce such a character as Uncle Tom with a saint as mistress, it is still answerable for a Mrs St. Clair and a Legree.

Interested in knowing approximately how many slaves there were round about me in Hongkew I looked through one of the tenement houses immediately in our vicinity. The general entrance is rather imposing, and you see in front of you a wide alley. Then turn to the right or left you see opening from this about five or six short rows of little houses with a narrow alley running between the several rows. On an average such a tenement place would contain two or three hundred residents. Taking one of these places at random I made enquiries and found within between thirty and forty slave girls. Just think of there being such a large percentage of slaves in even a tenement house !

Somehow the idea was suggested that a paper was to be written. Then information was given with reluctance. The people said, " You

ought not to make public the shame of our China." I do not believe that our dear China will be benefited by concealing her ulcers, but rather by cleansing them and allowing them to heal. I do believe also that there is a power to respond to remedies for moral evils. We of the medical profession have been gratified to find this in the case of physical disorders. In these days the collocation of the facts of experience is the scientific method of procedure with both physical and moral problems. I will not therefore be deterred from my purpose even to save the "face" of my beloved country, and will give you a few of the instances within my knowledge.

My first painful contact with the system of girl slavery occurred in far off Szechuan. One of my school-mates there was little Winnie. She was not pretty, but she was at least sweet and amiable, and she sang with an almost phenomenal voice. Our teacher would often smile and say, "Ah, how people would appreciate Winnie's voice in America!" Unfortunately she had no mother, and her father was an opium smoker. One day, finding himself without the means of indulging his appetite, what did he do but sell his mere slip of a girl! How well I remember the consternation among us when one of the school-mates came in haste to tell us that she had seen Winnie's father carrying her off to her master! A messenger was dispatched, and you will be glad to hear that means were found for her rescue. Alas! her respite was short, for like a thunder clap came the riots of 1886 and all foreigners were driven away from Chungking. When we heard from that place again we learned that Winnie had been resold. Somewhere she may be still living. Who would not hope that the truths she garnered at school have proven "a savor of life unto life" in a higher and better world?

My sorrow for Winnie's lot cannot be compared with what I felt for my class-mate, Sin Si-chen, on hearing that she too had been sold by an opium-smoking father. She was my best friend in school, and her mind was as beautiful as her person. We were baptized together, and she confessed to me that she should like to devote her life to Christian work, adding, so sadly, that she must try to first help her father. Where were gone her longings and aspirations when she became the concubine of a man sixty years of age? Surely, on this eve of China's regeneration, we, the more favored ones, must plead with all our might that all these unnatural customs shall be swept away with the last relics of our country's barbarism. The laws too which recognize these evils by levying taxes on the export of slave girls should receive attention. Just now the newspapers in Japan are struggling valiantly to uphold the law for the protection of girls from servitude. We may at least be striving for the law.

As I grew older I was none the less haunted by the sorrows of these little outcasts of society. There is no time to recount all their tales, but I will refer to a few of those more recently brought to my notice.

Directly opposite our home at Kiukiang dwells a woman fairly well-to-do in the world; she kept two slave girls, one above and one under ten years of age. Her treatment of the two poor creatures became a neighborhood scandal. The younger of the two being weaker and less useful suffered the more. Rarely did they have enough to eat, and my sister as well as the other neighbors tried sometimes to give them a full meal, but they needed to be exceedingly wary or a harder beating than usual would be forthcoming. No bedding was furnished them; only a heap of straw, and often the younger one was made to sit on a bamboo chair all through the night. Being but scantily clothed you can imagine how the child would shiver through the cold wintry nights. As she grew weaker she must have suffered more without any outsiders knowing it, and evidently her shivering angered her master, for he made her tramp up and down the room, saying, "The foreigners tell us 'exercise stirs up the circulation and makes people warm.'" One morning, sleepy and weary, she was perhaps a little more stupid than usual, and did not heed her mistress' commands fast enough, so a quick blow came, and she was stretched upon the hard stone floor. This time she did not rally. Later on a Christian neighbor came, asking if we would not try and see if anything could be done to help the child. We found her thrown on a brush heap in the back yard. There was no roof anywhere to cover this child of God except the pitying heavens. She was in terrible convulsions, so we asked hurriedly if we might remove her to our hospital. "You do not think she will live, do you?" was the query. "No, we do not think she will, but we wish to do our best for her any way." The permission was grudgingly given, and we took her in. After a while the heartless woman came to look at her property. Seeing the child lying quietly in a bed and surrounded by every comfort she asked again, "Is she going to live?" "No," we sadly replied. "Then when she is at her last gasp just throw her out into your front yard, and when she is cold I will send a man with a sack for her." How indignant we were, but we only said, "What harm would she do us if she did die in the hospital?" So, all unconscious, she passed away to Him, who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." You have heard enough, but let me mention another case.

A little slave girl was carried to our hospital in a serious condition, the result of ill-treatment at the hands of her mistress, who belonged to one of the richest families in the city. My colleague spoke kindly to the suffering one and said she would be glad to take her in, but the servants

who brought her could not give a guarantee that they left her with us for better or worse. As her condition was critical the doctor did not feel she could take her in without such assurance. While the servants returned to ask the mistress, the wounded child brokenly replied to our sympathetic enquiries. We learned that her mother's brother, who was addicted to opium, had stolen her away from her widowed mother in the far away home in Szechuan and sold her as a slave. So it is that opium and slavery, like two sworn brother robbers, support each other in their evil course. If one could be captured the other might more easily surrender. The servants returned unsuccessful, and with sorrow we saw them pick up the little bruised body and not too tenderly carry it away. The Roman Catholic hospital also refused to take the child in. Somehow, after her return, a vague idea seemed to form in her mind that if she once got to the hospital she would be all right. So she managed to get up and started out to find us. Here and there she wandered and asked the way, but her pursuers overtook her and carried her back. Her mistress, in a fit of anger on seeing her brought back, actually beat her to death on the spot.

Do I need to ask if it remains our duty to keep quiet and calm as to this system of girl slavery in China? If so, I turn and appeal to the higher court where our narrow judgments will so often be reversed.

“ And grant, O Father ! that the time
Of Earth's deliverance may be near,
When every land and tongue and clime
The message of thy love shall hear,—
When, smitten as with fire from heaven,
The captive's chain shall sink in dust,
And to his fettered soul be given
The glorious freedom of the just ! ”

By Mrs. N. P. ANDERSEN (Chinese), *Shanghai*.

I have been requested to speak upon a subject which I may say has interested me for years and which I am glad has now progressed so far that we are assembled this morning to discuss the matter, and see what can be done to alleviate the condition of a number of human beings more unfortunate than the general run of unfortunates in this world, namely, *the slave girls of China*.

So deeply rooted is modern civilisation in its antagonism towards slavery that the mere mention of the word “slave” is sufficient to call up to our memories—or imagination—pictures embodying all that is harrowing and cruel in our eyes. The passive victims of their owners' will, these unfortunate slaves are taught to feel that they are only so much flesh and blood to obey the behests of their masters or mistresses—

beyond which there must nothing be expected. The very word "slave" is defined in English, "A person who is the property of, and wholly subject to, the will of another."

The very significance of such a definition is graphic enough to make anyone feel how entirely dependent are the life and future prospects of a slave—and especially a slave girl—on the character and whim of its owner. You will have observed, I dare say, that I have here referred to the slave in the *neuter*. I trust you will pardon the paradox; for, taking the slave, as he or she substantially is, the slave after all is but a *neuter*.

I have said that the condition of the slave in China depends entirely on the character and nature, good or evil, of the owner. It must be remembered that I am now speaking especially of the slave girl as I have had her depicted to me, and as I have known her in my experience.

As a matter of fact, those slaves whose lines have fallen in pleasant places and happen to be owned by wealthy and noble families—for slave owners are not *all* wicked and cruel—find their lot happy enough, especially when there are a number of them and there are daughters in the family. As a rule each daughter has selected for her as her attendant at least two slave girls, of about similar age to the young ladies, whose duty is to wait solely upon them.

These slaves become in time regular companions of their young mistresses, and if bright and clever are invariably allowed to study the same books and to learn to embroider, etc., under the same teachers engaged to teach the daughters of the house. The slave girls become the confidantes and close, though humble, companions—for they seldom forget their own origin—of their respective young mistresses, and as a rule follow them—as part of the bride's dower—when they get married. If attractive and pretty the slave girl eventually gets chosen to be her new master's concubine, thus becoming her mistress's companion for life. This practice is quite common, and we often hear of such concubines being specially honoured by the Emperor at the petition of a favourite minister, who happens to be the son of the slave girl who in after life has become more fortunate than the mistress of her childhood.

If the slave girl is not chosen to be a concubine she is generally respectably married to some tradesman able to support her decently, a task which her young married mistress usually takes upon herself to attend to. A slave girl is generally supposed to be of a marriageable age at between twenty-one and twenty-four years. I have so far spoken of the selected slave girls of the daughters of wealthy and noble families in China. I may here state at once that the other slave girls of such families, who have not been so fortunate, are attached to do duty in the apartments of the lady of the household, and if there happen to be

concubines, a certain number are told off to wait upon these last. When these slave girls come to marriageable age, the mistress of the house generally marries them, if not to respectable tradesmen or handicraftsmen, to the male slaves of the household, who have arrived at man's estate and are filling positions of trust and importance in the management of their master's vast estates, mostly arable fields and house property in cities. In this generation the slave—male or female—is still a slave, unless he or she is married *out* of the family and given liberty by the owner's *written* consent. Their progeny in such cases, if still living on their master's estates and what is called "still eating their owner's rice," that is, serving under them, are still considered in the light of slaves, and it is not until the third generation has sprung up that they can consider themselves actually free from bondage, when, if they still remain in the family, they have wages paid them like any other hired servant. Hence we often find amongst noble families generation after generation of male slaves still serving succeeding generations of masters.

The pictures I have drawn above relate, of course, to the general life of male and female slaves of wealthy and noble families of old standing in this country, and is, after all, a happy and contented enough life for them where the word "liberty" is never heard whilst "dependence" is seen everywhere. Some of these slave girls are purchased through brokers or "middlemen" or "middlewomen" as the Chinese phrase goes. No questions are asked so long as a guarantee is given that the parents of the little things—for they are generally six or seven years old—will not come and give trouble in the future. Many of those who have come from the poorest families therefore enter paradise by coming into a wealthy family's household, whilst those unfortunates who were kidnapped from places far off—belonging perhaps also to good families—enter a life much below them. But they seldom get away again from bondage, although stories are sometimes told in which kidnapped children have been sold to relatives of the bereaved parents and so have happily rejoined their families in course of time; but these are cases few and far between.

As I have already stated slave girls and boys are sold and bought very young for obvious purposes, generally at the ages of six or seven. Few are sold at over fourteen years of age, and in such cases may safely be set down as having been kidnapped in nine cases out of ten.

I have in treating of the lives led by slave girls of notables and wealthy families given what may be termed "the pleasant and happy phases of slave life." There are, of course, exceptions; but these exceptions usually relate to only one or two slave girls who may have been persistently perverse and rebellious in their conduct, setting discipline

at defiance and showing a bad example to the rest of the slave girls of the household. In such instances disciplinary measures are resorted to which we consider cruel and barbarous. If punishments fail in reforming the slave girl's character, the last resort of the owner is to give the girl away to some other family or resell her. But, while this is the case of one or two, the majority of the slave girls of the families of wealth or nobility are, as a rule, most kindly and liberally treated by their mistresses, for the master of the household seldom takes any notice of slave girls; his duty being to govern the male members of his house.

Little slave girls bought by the middle classes are badly treated and made to work like grown persons, carrying buckets of hot water, splitting wood, etc.; they are badly fed, poorly clad, and in the depth of winter often made to go about bare-footed. These poor little girls are punished for the least little offence with such severity as borders on barbarism. To my own knowledge a little slave girl was beaten by her mistress until she could no longer wield the brick, and like punishments on other occasions were prevented by a threat to inform the police. On another occasion a little slave girl crawled into our garden one afternoon and was found by us asleep under one of the rose bushes. She had been beaten black and blue, and, when we asked her whence she came, she said that her mistress was an opium smoker, who after beating her had thrown her out of the house and told her not to come back again. We took the child in and washed and clad her, as she was in rags; we kept her for a week, and no one enquiring for her, we sent her away to the girls' school in Foochow, and she is now married to a native minister and a happy mother of eight or ten children.

The chief ambition of those who invest in slave girls for bad purposes is to make them into what are termed "singing girls," who are considered the highest class and command the highest prices. These wicked dealers have their agents throughout the country on the watch for the brightest and prettiest children they can get, if not by purchase then by theft, for these agents are also naturally kidnappers by profession. Kidnapping is of course the cheaper course, but these people prefer, as a rule, to buy their victims, owing to the severity of Chinese law in the interior cities against kidnapping.

If their unfortunate victims have already had their feet bound and crushed, well and good, their owners make them bind their feet more tightly in order that they may show a sharper and therefore more shapely foot. As a rule, however, these dealers prefer to buy their slave girls very young—at most at seven years of age or so—so that they can more easily form their characters and give them the necessary instruction in singing and other accomplishments.

It is in this phase of the life of the little creatures that I wish to impress upon my hearers the necessity of coming to their rescue from the cruel and often barbarous manner in which they are treated by their owners. Sometimes these cases come to the knowledge of the police, and we then read in the newspapers that such and such a case was before the Mixed Court magistrate and the foreign assessor. If the charge is serious the woman gets punished by a few rattan stripes and a few days' imprisonment, while the poor child victim is sent to the native house of refuge and, as it were, "confiscated." If it is an ordinary charge of bad treatment we often hear of the woman paying a small fine, while the victim is *returned to her* on a guarantee being given that no more bad treatment is given!

I should state here that the only difference between Cantonese and other purchasers of human beings is, that the former do not bind the feet of their victims (as they are destined in some future time to become concubines of their rich and wealthy patrons who do not care for small-footed concubines as a rule), whilst those of other provincials demand small-footed women. This is the only difference between the two sections of this vile class. In cruelty and harshness of treatment and other modes of procedure the two are exactly alike and their iron rule is always sure to break the spirit of their victims, who in time become ostensibly their obedient slaves in everything. The first torture suffered by these little unfortunates (generally speaking) is, therefore, that of having their little feet bound and crushed. I will not dwell—for I can hardly bear it—on the tortures and sufferings gone through by this process; but to make matters still worse their owners use pins and needles to prick their victims if the pain they suffer prevents them walking, which is necessary in order to create circulation when the feet are bound. I do not speak of the wooden club or rattan used to make these children walk about the room, for that is merciful compared with the needles and pins, sometimes heated red hot and applied to the arms and legs of the victims to enforce obedience. The same tortures and beatings are resorted to, to make their victims learn singing and playing upon musical instruments, and when they grow larger they are taught the usual etiquette and duty of pleasing their future patrons. Even when they have come to the age of fifteen or sixteen, such cruel treatment is still their lot if they dare to offend their patrons in any way, and I may say that, generally speaking, there are few of these wretched slaves but can show some marks of former whippings on their bodies or some horrid scars on their persons, the result of red hot needles; for, for the sake of their vile trade, no dealer willingly disfigures her victim's face or foot. It is these poor slaves of a vile class who demand our first attention here, where our influence may

be used to stop further cruelty of treatment by getting the police to keep vigilant watch over such people and to have cruelty severely punished. I will not say punished as they deserve, for naturally under a benign government no criminal can be punished and made to suffer commensurately to the barbarity of which he or she has been guilty. Good work has been done by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; why should there not be a society for prevention of cruelty of children?

Lady Blake and Ladies, I fear I have taken up too much of your time already this morning, and I will therefore close my paper with the wish that now the subject has been broached, steps may be soon taken to save the wretched children who form the subject matter of this paper.

GENERAL DISCUSSION.

Mrs. HOPE GILL, from Szechuan:—My husband and I went on a journey to the north of Chungking. There we saw slave girls dressed as boys. There was one girl I especially noticed, who was about fifteen. When she came to the Sunday service there was a tussle as to which side of the chapel she should sit. She was well grown, and it was a natural mistake to think her a boy with her queue and boy's shoes. The women said, "She is a Ya-teo, or slave girl." She belonged to some well-to-do trades-people in Mien-chu, and had been brought from Chen-tu, where they have slave markets. She looked not ill-treated, but well-dressed and cared for. She was a nurse girl, and brought her charges with her. One object in dressing her like a boy was that she might go about in the streets if her owners wished. We never were able to know much about her, though she liked to come and see the foreigners.

Mrs. Dr. BOONE, Shanghai:—In the records of the women's ward in St. Luke's Hospital we find many instances of slave girls brought in. I will give but one illustration. A few months ago a woman was accused by her neighbours of cruelty to her slave. The child was sent to St. Luke's. She was fourteen or fifteen years old, but no larger than a girl of seven or eight. Her face looked miserable, her body even worse. Her mistress had starved, pinched, beaten her without any limit, and finally, to vent her rage, had burnt the girl with hot irons. Her arms, hands and legs were burnt to the bone. I had a photograph taken of the poor sufferer. When she first came to us, she was afraid of the sight of any and all, but before she died she grew to know and love us. The only thing she ever wanted was something to eat. (The photograph was shown round.)

Something can be done, besides the moral influence of each upon those around. It *must* be done. These two questions (slavery and infanticide) should be brought up until something is done. Slavery

was only comparatively recently abolished in England and America. Why should it not be done away with in China when the laws of new China are made? We have now in the hospital a slave girl of two years of age.

Miss MITCHELL, Wuhu:—This summer I spent my vacation in Japan. There my heart was made to ache over the sorrows of our Japanese sisters. I had been deeply interested in the girls in Wuhu, and now these added griefs came to my knowledge. It was laid upon my heart to see if the Lord would not help us to assist our poor suffering sisters. It has been proved that the human heart is the same all over the world. It is cruel to plead with girls to lead a different life when they are bound, utterly helpless, and no help can be given them. I thought if the sisters from all over China could get together they might see what could be done. The Lord laid it upon my heart to go to Mrs. Little, who, as would be expected, supported me. She was most interested, and said, "How singular? I also had the same thought!" Through Mrs. Little and the committee has come the Conference. Now what can we do? The thought of the piece of statuary, Laocoön, has often come to me. The father and sons writhing in the toils of the serpent. Our Chinese sisters are so bound. Cannot we help them? How many want to be free? They are sold when they are tiny girls. Are they responsible? Shall we pull our dresses aside? I had heard that Mr. Murray was successful in dealing with this question in Japan, so I went to him. He told me there is now no slavery in Japan. Contracts are entered into, but they can be broken when the girls are used for immoral purposes, or when they become a nuisance. Here in Shanghai we went to Dr. Allen, Mr. Wilkinson, and others. They told us there was nothing in the present treaties that could help us, and they doubted whether a clause could be put in the new one that will be made, which would be effective. But see what prayer has done for Peking! God will not fail us in this!

The girls cannot help themselves; they are sold, they are bound. Their physical suffering is small compared with the suffering of soul. We can help them if we combine and do our best, and I believe God will help us.

Mrs. LITTLE:—In Szechuan the principal article of commerce is slave girls. From that beautiful place come many miserable slaves. On the steamer one day my cabin was overrun with slave girls; some pretty, others not; some better dressed, others in rags. I asked one after another, Have you father or mother? And I still hear their soft tones as they answered "No got." It is very affecting to think there is no end to the traffic, and that girls who might become fully developed women, such

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as Dr. Mary Stone, are sold as slaves. There must be a way to do something, if not by treaty, some other way. I should like to know what law there is about slave girls in Hongkong.

Lady BLAKE:—No law exists against slavery in Hongkong, for, being British territory, any slave who lands is nominally free. How can there be a law against that which does not exist? However, it is known that a great traffic does exist, though the police try to check it. The most difficult part of their duty is trying to find out where the evil is. But we can have no law that a person who is free should be free. Here I should like to mention that my great-grand-uncle, Rev. Mr. Ramsey, was the first to turn the attention of Wilberforce to the subject of slavery in our West Indian colonies by a pamphlet he wrote on the subject.

SENSATION.

A peculiarity, I think, in the south is, that slave girls must give their consent before they can be married. Their mistresses find this a great trouble and grumble that they cannot dispose of their slaves in marriage as easily as they can dispose of their daughters.

The Conference having closed for the day, Miss Murray invited all those who could spare the time to remain for a few minutes' special prayer relating to the subject that had that morning moved so many hearts—that of slave girls in China.



THIRD DAY.

Mrs. Little occupied the chair during the first hour. At her request Mrs. T. Richard opened the meeting with prayer.

Foot-binding.

By Dr. GIFFORD KILBORN.

So much has already been said in Shanghai in regard to foot-binding that I am afraid very much of what I shall have to say will be a repetition. My remarks apply particularly to the city of Chen-tu, Szechuan. Mrs. Little has told you very much about what has been done in Szechuan, but it is a subject on which too much cannot be said.

The definite origin of foot-binding is unknown. One tradition says that a concubine of Chen Ho-jü, of the T'ang dynasty, bound her feet for amusement and showed them to the Emperor, who admired them very much. From that time she continued to bind her feet, and the other ladies of the Court followed her example, and soon the fashion spread throughout the empire. Another tradition says this concubine had deformed feet and bound them to hide the deformity. Another story is that a certain Emperor commanded the women to bind their feet to keep them from gadding around, but my teacher declares there is no truth in this, that it has been fabricated for amusement. He laughed incredulously at the story.

In regard to the manner of binding I think you are all familiar with it. I presume it is about the same in all parts of the empire. In Chen-tu they begin to bind the feet at from five to eight years of age, which may mean from three and a half to six and a half by our way of counting years. The feet are bound by the mother or grandmother, and if a little girl's mother dies, the neighbors pity her because she has no one to bind her feet. The suffering is slight at first, but as the child grows the bandages are slowly tightened until the suffering becomes very intense. The health of the child is affected; she objects to walking, her sleep is disturbed and appetite impaired. She is often beaten, pinched, and sometimes has needles and pins thrust into her to make her walk. She sleeps with her feet hanging over the edge of the bed, and is frequently unable to get even a little sleep.

The bandages are removed and the feet washed in from ten to thirty days, often only once a month. Sometimes face powder is put on the feet, and, as most of their face powders contain lead, it has a deleterious effect on the health, and the child objects to the unbinding and wash-

ing because of the intense pain of binding again, and after the feet have been crushed she suffers intensely. Sometimes a child tries to loosen the bandages, but the mother or grandmother finds it out, and she is punished and the bandages tightened. The deformity is not complete until twelve or thirteen years of age. The results are, as I have already said, the health is impaired, growth is retarded, and by the constant abuse the moral nature of the child is very much dwarfed and perverted. Then many medical and surgical cases—diseases of the foot—are the result of this cruel practice. It causes ulcers of the heels, toes, and legs. Sometimes the toes become gangrenous and drop off.

Very frequently the feet drop off as the result of tight bandages. What do they apply when left to themselves? Face powder, chiefly lead, and perhaps they lose the feet as the result. I wish you could see some of the little feet in our hospital in West China.

After marriage a wife may loosen her feet if her husband is willing. She may either loosen or tighten them as she wishes, or as her husband desires. In some cases the husband will make her take off the bandages, so that she may work. Especially is this the case in the country. It is not so convenient to work with small feet as it is with large ones. In some cases the husband has the wife's feet bound tighter so as to have smaller feet than her neighbors.

A few words on the classes of women who bind their daughter's feet. While we may find among the rich the smallest feet, my experience has been that among the middle and the poorer classes they adhere to the custom with a more slavish obedience. Why? Because they hope their daughters may rise to a higher position because of their small feet. They must bind the daughter's feet or they cannot get her married, and thus are slaves to fashion. With the rich it does not make so much difference if the daughter does not marry till a later age.

Slaves in the West, as a rule, have large feet. There is no rule about it, but left to themselves they have to work, and so loosen their bandages, if their feet have been bound. I have seen only one slave with bound feet.

The reasons, then, for binding are:—

1. To secure husbands for the girls.
2. It is the fashion.

I have heard it stated by a Chinese that any girl who can read, write, and reckon, be her feet large or small, has no difficulty in making a good marriage. This is a good argument to use when endeavoring to persuade them to attend school and unbind.

In Chen-tu we had an anti-foot-binding society with quite a large membership. I believe there are societies in almost all the cities where

there are missionaries. A strong feeling is growing up against it among people of the official class. I have met several who are not binding their daughter's feet.

We think that in West China the prospects for emancipation are good. The anti-foot-binding society has a large membership in Chen-tu, and the feeling against binding is growing year by year. We are doing all we can towards it in our boarding-schools. We will not take in any who will not unbind their feet. We have as many meetings as can be conducted.

I hope in the new China that is to be, something may be done to forbid the cruel practice of foot-binding, for so long as the women of China are physically dwarfed, just so long will they be mentally and spiritually dwarfed.

Miss FRENCH, *Chekiang.*

Foot-binding is a subject with which we are all more or less familiar. There is, probably, not a missionary present this morning, who has not been called upon some time in her experience to alleviate the sufferings caused by this barbarous custom, and yet not one, in all probability, has ever heard any of its victims voluntarily say that the practice of foot-binding naturally entails suffering and disease. Why a mother should be willing, after having undergone herself years of torture from this cruel practice, to inflict the same punishment for life on her own little daughter, is a mystery that none of us can understand, notwithstanding the iron-clad custom around her on every side. And still a greater mystery is the fact that this custom seems never to have been held responsible for the pain which all these little feet suffer and the life-long disease that many of them have in consequence of it. I remember once a mandarin of high rank came and asked if I would go and see his wife, who he said was suffering agony with her feet and limbs. I found the woman sitting robed in gorgeous apparel with the usual amount of cosmetics pasted over her face, but not sufficient to efface the pained expression so plainly written there. Upon being told I must see her feet, she, like all others with whom I have had to do, did all she could to prevent my seeing the poor little mutilated feet and fleshless limbs, but when convinced I could do nothing for her without seeing them, she had her servant to unbind them. Bound feet are always sickening deformities to look upon, and more sickening to the olfactories because of the offensive odor that arises from them.

This lady's feet were unusually free from the latter, because they were unusually well kept. Her feet had evidently been bound early, almost in babyhood, judging from the size. She had perhaps not been allowed to walk during the early binding process, during their growth,

because her feet were remarkably free from the ugly hump on the instep; and the enlargement about the ankle that is almost always seen with these feet, caused by the superfluous amount of flesh and bone pressed up by the bandages above the tiny embroidered shoes. According to Chinese ideas, on account of this ugly inflamed enlargement being conspicuously absent, her feet would be considered perfectly beautiful and shapely feet. Her toes had been so skillfully drawn under, and were so elongated and flattened and embedded in the flesh underneath, that they were really almost a part of the sole of the foot. The limb above was lifeless, fleshless and helpless,—literally nothing but skin and bone, without any appearance of muscle; and while it was indeed a hideous ugly deformity, she had one thing for which to be grateful, and that was that the skin was not broken, and was free from the ulcers which usually accompany these lifeless members. When the poor little sufferer was told that all her trouble resulted from the bindings, she said, "Ah! no, that cannot be, as all women bind their feet!" This woman had all to make her happy so far as Chinese regard happiness, but was utterly miserable because of her feet. She was of the official class. But the class with which I am most thrown is the weaver class; there too the same little feet suffer, not in luxury and comfort, but in poverty and work, winding silk day and night. In the cold wintry weather their feet, through which the blood circulates so little, become very numb in consequence of it, and they often are frost-bitten, or blistered from the foot stoves which they use while winding the silk, and in either case they are equally hard to heal, and sometimes their feet become a mass of putrefaction, from which the bones project. In one case I remember the entire foot had to be taken off. This is the suffering side of this question, which calls forth all of one's sympathy; but there is another, even more dreadful, I mean the awful pride that goes along with this cruelty. Pride is not confined, we all know, to China alone, for we, these little women's Western sisters, are not free from this characteristic; but nowhere on earth, I believe, in anything is it to be seen more than in these women regarding their feet. It is the one thing in which they all agree and which they all do the empire over, except of course the children of Christians, who are only too glad to be free from such bondage; but to many of the mothers it is a great sorrow that their daughters should have large feet. With many women, some of us know, who come into the church, it is something to which they cling with the greatest tenacity, and they will not often loosen their bindings when they could, at least, to some degree,—showing only too plainly how deeply rooted this pride is in their whole being. My Bible woman is a living monument to this slavery. When I first came to China and began to go out among the women she was my constant companion, and when a slight

loosening of the bandages would certainly have given her more freedom in walking, she preferred going on with her small feet, walking miles and miles with me every week, and the only compensation she received, was that she heard, wherever we went, that she had such *pretty little feet*! Many instances, I am sorry to have to say, I could bring in by way of substantiating this sad fact, but it is only too true, as the missionaries present know only too well. I acknowledge with shame and regret that in my eagerness to see souls saved I have, to a large degree, lost sight of the sin of the cruel custom, and I do not doubt that others present would say the same. I really think we owe much to Mrs. Little for the inspiration she has given us on this subject in her visits to our stations. She has set an example in this noble work in encouraging us to go forth to battle with this deadly foe as never before.

Mrs. EASTON, *Kansuh*. •

I have to speak this morning of the prevalency of foot-binding in North Kansuh. In Shensi and Kansuh the upper and middle classes have exceptionally small feet. In Kansuh the women have such small feet that it is usual for them to go about on their knees when they get down from their k'ang (or brick bed). Consumption is very prevalent, and perhaps others will bear me out in saying that foot-binding has much to do with it; lack of exercise being a predisposing cause. The difference between the little girls' faces before and after they begin to bind the feet is most marked and so pitiful. The binding is begun when the child is about five years of age—from five to seven, according to size. Then you can see the difference in the children: the sad, pale faces of the little sufferers, not like English children, but sitting down, nursing their feet and crying over them, when but a short time before they were running about and playing happily. There was one little girl, a favorite of mine, whose bed-room was separated from my sitting-room by a thin wall only. When her feet were being bound the screams of the child were so dreadful that I thought she was being beaten to death. I couldn't stand it, and had to run out and put my fingers into my ears to prevent hearing her screams.

After an experience of several years one understands how custom has such a hold on the people that it will require much endeavor to be overcome. The girls themselves seem eager to have their feet bound. If a little girl loses her parents, the neighbors say, "Poor thing! she has no one to bind her feet for her!" The girls feel neglected if their feet are not bound, and I have seen them helping one another to bind their feet. The little ones themselves like small feet. The men must be educated to admire and to marry large-footed women. They are now unwilling to

marry girls with natural feet. The question with them is not the face but the feet. The usual questions about a lady are, "What size are her feet?" "Has she small feet?" While the men admire this cruel custom and look down upon one who has large feet, the custom must prevail. In some parts of Shensi are districts having women with large natural-sized feet. They don't bind their feet, but wrap them up to resemble bound feet, more or less, and wear a pointed shoe.

Once when I was visiting in Han-chong, an old gentleman asked me to go in to see his family. Neither his wife nor daughter had bound feet. He was very much interested in the subject of foot-binding, and had written a tract against the custom. Though not a Christian, he did not worship idols. He would not have his daughter's feet bound, for the reason that he would not give her the great pain of it. No one had talked to him of the ill-effects of the custom. It was all from his own philanthropic ideas. Because of their natural feet his wife and daughter were alienated from other women. His wife did not like to go out because she was so different from others—too much an object of notice.

I try to get the girls in our school to unbind their feet, and almost all of them do so; but, after living in the school for some time, they often bind their feet again on leaving and returning home. One re-bound after marriage. She was a really sweet Christian girl. I never could find out who was to blame. While her feet were unbound it was embarrassing just to see the sneers on peoples' faces as she walked along the street. It was not unusual for our girls who had large feet to be called "false foreigners," and otherwise to be sneered at. So, if our Christian women and girls are willing to unbind their feet, the motive power must surely be for Christ's sake.

GENERAL DISCUSSION.

Miss ABBOTT, Nan-ch'an-fu, Kiangsi :—I should like to ask Mrs. Easton if in Shensi and Kansuh there are not Manchu women who bind their feet?

Mrs. EASTON replied :—I have never seen nor known of one.

Miss ABBOTT :—In Nanking the Manchu men choose Chinese wives because they have more beautiful feet than the Manchu women. It has been my experience, on the other hand, that Chinese Christians seem to be proud of wives with large feet. A Christian man married one of the girls from the Kiukiang school, with natural feet of course. It is not polite to ask about another's wife, but some of his friends asked him how large his wife's feet were. When asked, "Is your wife's foot so large?" (measuring between thumb and forefinger), he would

jokingly say, "Yes, so large," measuring from finger to shoulder, instead of from finger to thumb. I think this showed his pride in his wife's natural feet.

Mrs. SHEFFIELD, T'ungchow:—One would naturally think that in Peking, where the Manchus set the fashion, it might be easier for the Chinese women to have natural feet, but, no, there is a race pride involved. I never heard of a Manchu with bound feet. If we use the argument that the Empress doesn't bind her feet, they say, "Ah! but we are Chinese, and she is a Manchu;" so the fact that the Manchus have natural feet doesn't help at all. We could make no impression on the family of a little Christian girl when they bound her feet. The grand-mother said, "It is because we love our little girl that we cannot unbind her feet. We want to marry her to a respectable man, and *must* bind her feet." In 1890 our Chinese helpers themselves helped to organize an anti-foot-binding society. They decided not to bind their daughters' feet, nor to betroth their sons to girls with bound feet. About ninety women and girls who would have had their feet bound are free from the custom, and Christian women had unbound their feet. That was about three years ago. I have not visited the place since 1898.

Miss ONYON, Shanghai:—Women who do not bind their feet are looked down upon. It is not only the mother and grand-mother, but the children themselves who want the feet bound. If the mothers do not bind their little girls' feet, it is often the case that when the girls grow up they abuse their mother for neglecting them; they cannot make a good marriage with large feet. I know a case of a child betrothed in infancy. Her parents died, and she went to her mother-in-law's to live. Her feet had not been bound, and the mother-in-law began it when the child was seven years old. Then the feet became frost-bitten and both feet were lost. Dr. Milles amputated them above the ankle. We have her in our school now, a clever girl of seventeen, good at needle work, English, in fact all branches. She gets about on crutches, and is a happy, healthy girl. We hope she can make a living teaching English.

Mrs. LITTLE:—There was a Chinese society, not Christian, of 300,000 men, heads of families, mostly in good position, who were opposed to foot-binding. Many husbands get their wives to unbind their feet, and do not allow their daughters' feet to be bound. There is an enormous movement in this direction among the people not reached by Christian influence. Many are not aware of what is being done by the Chinese themselves to free women from this cruel custom. Steaming five hours up a river from Swatow, they took me to see six leading families of Kit-yang, in all of which the

children's feet were not bound, and with one exception the ladies of the families were unbinding, or had unbound. Missionaries had nothing to do with it, and there was no anti-foot-binding society there, but all the ladies were unbinding their feet,—some of them very painfully. All their conversation was as to how their feet were coming on, whether the toes had or had not come up rightly. When the toes are refractory and hard to get up they pull them up with strings. They have a special way of binding which is easier to undo. I am not certain yet whether the Cantonese method of binding can be undone satisfactorily. Some think it cannot be done after forty, but I saw one old lady who had unbound at seventy and quite satisfactorily. There is a very large non-Christian movement against binding. I think missionaries are not aware how great help may be received from the officials. In every city, during a trip in the interests of unbinding, the highest officials helped me, and those at Hanyang and Hangchow informed me that they allowed no binding in their families. The Futai at Kiukiang, a Hunan man, allows no binding.

Mrs. EASTON :—In some parts the movement has stronger hold. And don't you think that in the southern provinces it is easier to unbind the feet? I have never seen a case in Shensi of unbinding without Christian influence.

Mrs. LITTLE :—Near Si-ngan-fu, Shensi, sixty ladies were led to unbind their feet by one Chinese man of wealth,—their relation,—two years ago, and he was still making many converts when last heard of.

Mrs. POLLARD, Yunnan :—Women know that if the feet are not bound their daughters will be despised, and there are many cases where women destroy their little girls rather than put them to the torture of foot-binding. They do it reluctantly; they know it is a great evil, and yet they are slaves to the demands of fashion. Western ladies can sympathize with them, for all like to be in the fashion. One woman said, "I am glad I am a disciple of Jesus and don't have to bind my girls' feet!" When our churches grow it is one of the first evils that will have to go, for they don't like it. Let us dwell upon the remedies rather than upon the evil. They must be encouraged to train their girls in Christian schools, marry them to Christian men and foot-binding will gradually die away. Then they will be as much ashamed to bind their feet as they now are not to bind them.

Mrs. LITTLE :—In Hankow the mother superior, who has had twenty-six years' experience, told me she never received as a Christian a woman who confessed to having killed her little girl but that one of the

reasons given was this horror of binding the child's feet. I am greatly interested to hear this confirmed by this information from Yunnan.

Mrs. RICHARD :—Not only are Christians interested in this anti-foot-binding movement, but tracts have been written against foot-binding by Chang Chih-tung and other Chinese officials. This is a very hopeful sign. I was astonished to hear any one suggest the idea that the *Manchu* women might bind their feet. No Manchu woman would have her feet bound, for, 250 years ago the Manchu conquerors made two laws; one that the Chinese women should unbind their feet and the other that the men should wear queues as a sign of servitude. The women unfortunately were not considered of sufficient importance to be made to submit, and the Chinese Board of Rites got the law concerning foot-binding repealed on the ground that the death penalty was too severe.

A few years ago a largely signed petition was sent to Peking asking the government to enforce the old law against foot-binding. The reply was, that so long as public opinion was in favour of foot-binding they dared not enforce that law, but as soon as a majority of Chinese were against the cruel custom the government would be glad to enforce the old law against it. What we have now to do, therefore, is to do our utmost to form a public opinion against the cruel custom.

Lady BLAKE :—Bishop Hoare told me that he thinks there is a great difference in localities. For instance, in Ningpo all women who have large feet are looked on as bad characters.

Miss SILVER, Shanghai :—It used to be so in Shanghai, but now it is coming to be recognized that the unbound foot is a proof that the possessor is an educated woman. We hope it will soon be so all over the empire.

Lady Blake then took the chair.

Marriage Customs.

Mrs. P. F. PRICE, *Chekiang.*

Marriage is something to which every Chinese girl looks forward as the one great event of her life, the one period when she is to be the observed of all observers. This is peculiarly so from the fact that betrothal takes place at such an early age that she hears constant allusions to her marriage from earliest childhood. Betrothals have been fully discussed in another paper, so I will only touch on the ceremonies connected with the betrothal day itself. These, of course, vary in many respects in different parts of the empire. This particular one which I am about to describe lately came under my observation. On the betrothal morning the two "go-betweens" came in a gaily decorated boat to the home of the girl's parents. They entered first and were received with a great deal of ceremony by the parents. Then there followed two bearers with the

betrothal jewelry—a ring, a pair of ear-rings, a pair of bracelets, and a hair ornament, and the silver dollars which had been agreed upon by the parties. Each of these dollars had been rubbed very bright by the groom-elect, and the character for “happiness” was written on each one. They were arranged on a handsomely decorated waiter and were placed upon a table prepared to receive them. Then followed other bearers carrying two waiters containing sixty pretty little boxes filled with tea and nuts. In exchange for these last the girl’s parents had prepared sixty little boxes of cakes. These were to be sent out to the friends of each family as announcements of the betrothal. A feast was then given to the go-betweens, after which they were escorted to the home of the groom, where later in the day they had another feast.

The marriage ceremony, which consists in the bride and groom together worshipping the ancestral tablet, worshipping heaven and earth, worshipping the groom’s parents, drinking alternately wine from the same cup, etc., is much the same in all parts of China.

One of the very interesting details is congratulating the newly-married couple. The bride and groom are seated in two chairs covered with red, and there are two vacant chairs in front of and facing them, with a red rug spread between. The groom’s best man calls out the names of the ones to come and congratulate them, beginning with the nearest relative of the groom. The absence of the bride’s relatives is generally conspicuous. After each couple is seated, the bride and groom make one, two, or three low bows, or get down on their knees and strike their heads on the floor. This latter is only done before parents, grand-parents, a former teacher, etc. The couple return the salutation and move aside to make room for others. Often money or presents are given for the privilege of congratulating the bride.

Chinese resent the phrase “buying a wife.” They use the expression “t’ao,” to beg. The money given to the bride’s parents is supposed to be used for her outfit, and if this is used it is really not enough to provide the outfit which the bride is expected to carry with her. I give a list of things which came under my observation a short time ago and which is a fair sample of a bride’s outfit:—

3 red trunks, 1 table, 2 chairs, 1 wardrobe, 3 tubs, 2 buckets, 2 commodes, 1 washstand, 1 trunk-stand, 1 dressing case, 1 work basket, 1 set of scissors, 1 foot stove, 1 tea-pot, 1 wine-pot, 2 candlesticks, 1 basin, 1 sugar bowl, 1 tea caddy, 1 set of tea cups, 1 set of bowls and dishes, 2 wadded quilts (red), 2 embroidered pillows, embroidered curtain for bed, and an outfit of clothes.

This is the ordinary list among the middle classes, which is often added to or subtracted from according to the wealth of the parents. The

bride's standing in her husband's family often depends largely upon the trousseau she takes with her. The groom's family, before the wedding takes place, send her a full suit of wadded garments, generally silk, and a black silk skirt. After a few days of festivities the bride settles down into the daughter-in-law, and too often it proves to be the place of almost a slave, or at the best the household drudge. You may imagine how much of discord and strife there would be where several sons were married, each bringing his wife to his parent's home. I saw a family not long ago of grand-parents, parents, and grand-children, numbering thirty-eight, and they all lived under one roof. This patriarchal life in China is in theory an attractive one, and owing to the conditions of society is perhaps for many reasons the wisest arrangement. But when we *live* among the people, visiting daily among them, we see the great unhappiness arising from this multiplication of families under one roof, and we feel that we shall welcome the day when our native Christians, from contact with missionaries and other Christian people of the West, will themselves begin to see the desirability of each family having a home of its own. This ideal I believe is what we should encourage among our Christians as the true type of family life.

GENERAL DISCUSSION.

Mrs. LITTLE asked Mrs. Price whether she was sure about the word worship. Could it perhaps bear the same meaning as our *worship* in the church marriage service?

Mrs. PRICE:—It is very difficult to say just what this worship means to the Chinese. The best scholars cannot decide. They have, however, no higher form of worship.

Lady BLAKE:—Might not the word be reverence?

Mrs. RICHARD:—In regard to the word worship, it is the very same word that they use for respect, viz., "pai." They say "pai-keh" when they mean visit and pay respects to friends. There are three degrees of respect: 1st, for friends; 2nd, for parents and ancestors; and 3rd, for the worship of God.

Mrs. CECIL SMITH, Kwei-chow:—Mrs. Price has given a very full account of a marriage in her part of the country, and it has been very interesting to me. It must be interesting to us all to hear from so many different parts of the country. This morning I have one or two questions to bring before you. We are on friendly terms with some wealthy families in our district,—the widow of a Chentai, and others, from whom we have gathered a few facts. I have seen these customs observed very

differently from Mrs. Price's account, but I will not attempt to give all the differences. In Kwei-yang we have to battle with the custom of the three days when the bride is almost common property. It is a time of merriment, all making a noise, and taking liberties with the bride that are very immodest, but not amounting to immorality. They go into the bride's chamber ;—all the husband's friends, and all the men may go. The husband may be a Christian, but all his friends are not. The remarks made are often indecent. They consider this the time for familiarities which they may take for once in their lives with the bride. The girl is pulled about with too much freedom, and her feet, her dress, her appearance, made the subject of close scrutiny, laughter, and jests. All this is called "*lao-shing-fang*,"—teasing the bride. Her husband is generally present, so it does not amount to immorality.

Another custom which prevails is that of a slave girl raised to the position of "*hong-kuniang*." I found that the people all through that part of the country used the word "*hong*," red, to express favoritism. For example a favorite servant is called the "*red man*." I was once called to the family of a late governor of Yunnan ; his son's wife being very ill, and no doctor at that time in the province, the husband himself came to fetch me, and while I rode in his chair he walked behind with my husband, thus showing respect to me and great concern for the one I was called to see. I found she was not a "*t'ai-t'ai*," but had more respect shown her and possessed more power than the "*i-t'ai*" or any secondary wife. They themselves said "*she rules the household*." Probably she was once a servant or slave girl, in which position she won the favor of this son of the family ; she had three sons, and had shown herself a capable girl, and so was raised to be his "*hong-kuniang*." She was only about twenty years of age when she died. I should like to ask if this custom has been observed in other provinces. The third custom we learned of was from an aboriginal tribe. It is what they call "*making sport with the girl*." The Chinese Miao-jia and Chong-jia live very close together in adjacent villages, where we live, and I have wondered whether this custom is not a corruption of some practice of the Miao, or other tribe, and not Chinese at all. After a girl has been received into her new home and has lived with her husband for some months she returns to her own home for awhile. If they find there that she is with child, she returns to her husband and lives with him ; but if not, she is sent into the market, where she makes acquaintance with different men, and if she then becomes with child she may return to her husband.

This custom we have to battle with. These three customs,—"*teasing the bride*" for three days, the "*red girl*," and "*making sport with the girl*" are all I will touch upon this morning.

[Such customs of aboriginal tribes as are referred to above seem to take us back to the time when the main idea of marriage was to produce as many fighting men as possible; hence the repudiation of a wife unless it could be proved that she could add to the numerical strength of the tribe.—ED.]

Mrs. MATEER, from Peking, said :—I have thought especially about the question of the marriage of our girls for the last few months. As you all know, I was in Peking in charge of a girls' school opened there twenty-one years ago. The hardest thing we have to do is to manage in regard to the marriage of the girls. We cannot speak with a Chinese girl about this. We must not make it necessary for her to speak. So we only say to her: "Are you willing to take this man for your husband? If you are not willing you may speak, but if you are willing you need not say anything."

What constitutes the legality of a marriage? We were much interested to see how the Chinese would solve this problem. Our Chinese pastor insists upon the red chair preceded through the streets by music. This is considered absolutely essential. Once during this year, as you all are aware, we were in such a condition as to make it important that the girls should be sent away from the school to places of safety, and I was glad to follow the Chinese custom and get rid of the girls by having all married who were betrothed and old enough to marry. This in order to protect the girls, for the father and mother are held responsible for any trouble to a betrothed girl. So we planned that the close of the spring term should be turned from "commencement day" into one great wedding day, in which I might possibly also take part as a bride; but this was impossible, for many customs were against it. I tried to send the girls home, but this also could not be done in every case. We were told they would have been less safe with their fathers than with us. I could not believe it, but afterwards I found the reason, for again and again a father would come in for protection, and when asked, "Where are your wife and children?" he would answer, "Everyone looks after himself at such a time as this." Marriage does not mean to the Chinese what it does to us. The respect and care shown towards women shows the difference between the Christian and heathen.

Mrs. LITTLE :—I want to ask questions with regard to two points. I have heard that in old times the Chinese carried the bride off by force, and that the wedding cortège is a relic of that, and I want to know whether the bride still must be of an alien family. Also, *why* is it that Chinese girls look forward to marriage?

Lady BLAKE :—In South China they can never marry one of the same surname.

Other ladies said it was the same in Yunnan, Kiangsi, Chihli, and other places.

Mrs. G. PARKER:—I was surprised to find that in Honan they can marry one of the same name.

One lady said the Chinese girls desire marriage that they may be the mothers of sons. In the interior, girls are not allowed to go out after they stop shaving their heads, except very rarely. After they have been married six days they can go back home and stay five days. After that, they can visit and go anywhere. They are free: and it is this freedom the girls look forward to in marriage.

The discussion had then to be adjourned till next day.

Miss Murray closed with prayer.



FOURTH DAY.

Friday, November 23rd.

The morning session of the Conference was opened with prayer by Mrs. Fitch, Mrs. Little presiding.

The subject "*Marriage Customs*," not finished on Thursday, was continued.

Marriage Customs.

By Mrs. A. P. PARKER, *Shanghai.*

I wish to read to you a few resolutions suggested and voted for by the native preachers of our Conference just adjourned.

These resolutions they propose to abide by themselves and urge upon their church members to do the same. They include resolutions concerning marriage, funeral, and social customs. I will only read those concerning the subject given me to-day,—marriage customs.

1st. The marriage of one man and one woman being one of the great relations it should be entered upon with great care; hence the consent of the parties most concerned should be gained before the betrothal is made, and parents should in no case force either son or daughter to enter upon this relation against his or her will.

2nd. The custom of adopting daughters-in-law is a bad one and should not be practiced by Christians, neither should the purchasing of female slaves be allowed.

3rd. In case of betrothals the family of the bridegroom should not insist on an expensive trousseau nor that of the bride upon heavy payment of money.

4th. Expensive preparations are earnestly to be deprecated as entailing heavy debt upon the young couples which embarrass them for many years.

5th. No attention should be paid to choosing lucky days for the marriage ceremony, excepting only to have regard for the Sabbath.

6th. All coarse customs contrary to Christian morality should be avoided, especially that reprehensible custom of Nao-sing-vong, or "teasing the bride."

This desire for reform is in the hearts of a great many of this people, and reform is coming, may we pray that they may be guided in it all by wisdom from above, and that they may not merely put on the outward cloak of civilization with the heart unchanged.

Lady Blake here took the chair.

Funeral Customs.

By Mrs. K. PRUEN, *Szechuan.*

While at Ch'en-tu twelve years ago, we lived in a large compound inhabited by several Chinese families, and found out, by observing their many idolatrous rites, how continually they were influenced by superstition in the chief events of life. They always resort to sorcery when an illness becomes dangerous, and to necromancy in case of a person's death. Moreover, as women always trust to necromancy to provide for their welfare in the next world, if they have not sons of their own to sacrifice to them when dead they invariably adopt sons or sons-in-law.

One of our neighbours, an elderly woman, was ill for several months when I often visited her and urged her to become a Christian, and her daughter-in-law promised that if the mother recovered she would become a Christian. But on recovery the mother said to me: "Don't talk to me anything more about the gospel, as my son will take care to make the usual offerings of rice to my spirit in the next world."

I shall now describe a funeral, all the ceremonies of which I saw with my own eyes and shall quote from my account written at the time. The funeral was that of our landlord, who died at Ch'en-tu in January, 1889. During his last illness my husband often visited him and had hopes of his salvation, but his wife was an out and out heathen.

The old man was 74 years of age; he died early in the morning, and at 10 a.m. a paper sedan chair was brought with three paper men, life size—two for chair-coolies and one for a guide to the city temple where one spirit of every person is supposed to go to receive the decision as to its future fate. This chair is provided, as it would be unkind to allow the spirit to walk. At two o'clock in the afternoon a Taoist priest came with charmed paper and candles, and, while chanting, burnt the sedan and figures; then wailing commenced by the family, as they supposed the spirit had gone forth to the judgment hall.

On the third day the family put on mourning, and on this day received presents toward the funeral expenses; our gift of money was placed on the altar before the coffin, where were also pork, candles, incense, and cakes. The spirit tablet was in the centre and one paper figure as supporter on each side. The same week the coffin was sealed up, the family being in deepest mourning. A Taoist priest chanted for them and scattered rice over the altar as a charm to prevent the spirits of the grand children being shut in the coffin, which would cause their death. All the family lamented most pitifully; they had wailed, at intervals, for seven days from morning till night. The daughter came to my class one day of this week and seemed interested to hear about heaven.

After this, the widow, who had been devoted to her husband, left her bedroom and brought her bed to the coffin side and there slept every night until the old gentleman's body was carried out of the house, a period of nearly nine months! This seemed to me a great proof of love.

This mourning was called "mourning without sorrow," as her husband had died full of years.

At the end of nine months the relatives gathered together for the burial. Six Taoists were engaged to conduct a three days' service for ten shillings. They used drums, gongs, flutes, cymbals, and a cow's horn. The sound of these throughout the whole night was deafening and most distressing. The first night was the ceremony of inviting the dead home again (whether only one of the spirits I am not clear) to occupy the spirit tablet. For this purpose the stuffed figure of a man was made and placed in the garden; it was covered with an umbrella and had a walking stick in its hand. In front of the figure wooden forms were arranged to represent a bridge over which the spirit was to re-enter his home through the spirit tablet. Then, while some of the priests were chanting, one of them stood in front of the bridge with a blue and silver streamer (such as are seen in high churches at home) and, waving it about, bowed to the figure, inviting him to return home over the bridge. On these occasions the priests generally choose one of their number, who is a ventriloquist, to carry on a pretended conversation with the dead person, thus unwittingly coming under God's condemnation given in Deuteronomy xviii, 11 to 14. I asked the daughter how she could tell when her father's spirit returned home, and she replied that a slight flutter or breath of wind would be the sign.

The second night's work was the freeing of the spirit from Hades, the quantity of money paid to the priests regulating the ceremonies.

On this occasion there was marked out in their courtyard the plan of a city, placing four stools to represent the city gates, and in the middle a chair with a light on it. The head priest was dressed in red with a crown on his head, while the eldest son, clad in sackcloth, had written on his back the characters. "Alas, alas, my father," and carried in his hands the spirit tablet. These two men (the head priest and eldest son), with the grand children, walked round and round the plan of the city, the other priests meantime chanting many prayers, until suddenly crackers were let off, and I was told the spirit was freed.

The third night was also spent in chanting, but we did not know the supposed object; however, at day-break a feast was given to the priests, and next day the coffin was taken away to be buried. Immediately after

the dead body had been carried out all signs of white mourning were taken down from the house and the widow put off her white turban, taking it off outside the house and walking back without any sign of grief whatever ; but after this I used to see the widow go occasionally to the Ch'eng-hwang-miao to burn incense for her husband.

Mrs. GRAHAM, *North Kiangsu.*

As I, at present, happen to be not only mother, but teacher, cook, Boy, and nurse,—all in one,—I have not had time to prepare a paper on the subject, and my remarks on a few of the customs and ways must be impromptu.

One of the saddest things to me is that the poor heathen not only have nothing to look forward to after death, but they have little comfort before. If a woman becomes very ill her neighbors wait until her death is supposed to be at hand, and then they all crowd in, getting interested in her all at once, though she may have been known to them a long time. They thought it not worth while to pay her any attention until there seemed to be no chance of her recovery, then they all crowd in to look, and gaze, and make all manner of remarks. "O yes; she'll die. My sister had this disease, and she died, so of course this one will die," says one with a sepulchral tone of voice, and the others comment on the phases that strike them as most hopeless. No wonder if the poor patient dies, but sometimes, notwithstanding all the talk, enough, one would think, to scare her to death, she does not die, but lives in spite of it all.

Preparations for the funeral are made before the sick person is dead. She is measured for the wadded clothes, the most important of all, for it would be awful not to have them, as they think the dead go to the coldest of regions. So they prepare everything for protection against cold, such as wadded clothes, foot-stove, etc. The poor dying woman sees her burial clothes, a sight usually denied us barbarians. She cannot even die in her own bed and room, but must be carried out of bed to the door, in order that the house may not be haunted by her spirit, and that it may not cling about the bed or room. Sometimes she is laid out in the court to breathe her last gasp. Another thing I have thought so dreadful is that when the patients are not unconscious they are usually terrified by evil spirits. In fact, the Chinese are greatly surprised if none are seen.

I had a Bible woman of lovely Christian character. She told me, once, of her husband's death, which occurred before she became a Christian. It was a typical death. He was terror-stricken by the demons he saw and heard. He had been rather a miserly man, but when he saw the evil spirits he screamed out: "Don't you see the evil spirits! They are

calling for money! Go, get them money. They will get me!" And his wife had to go and unlock the box and bring out the strings of cash with which to appease the evil spirits. How pitiful! Utter despair!

A Christian child of twelve years old died a beautiful death. She surprised the neighbors by saying she had not seen any evil spirits. She said: "There are no evil spirits near me; Christ is with me, waiting to take me, and why should I be afraid?" She had One with her Who gave her joy and peace.

Another thing:—before the body is taken away they spread a feast for the spirits. They are afraid of the spirits, and are unwilling to stay in the house while the feast is being partaken of by them, and they want to allow the spirits to come and eat in quiet; so the crowd leaves. In our part of the country there are a good many weasels. The Chinese take them for spirits. These weasels and rats and mice take advantage of the opportunity to come into the silent house and have a feast, so they hold high revelry, sharing the feast sometimes with dogs and cats, much against their will. These weasels and rats leave their little foot-prints in the ashes perhaps, and on the floor, and the people returning see these tracks and say to one another: "See! here's where the spirits have been." They will not enter the house until a gong has been beaten to drive the spirits away. My Bible woman said she never believed in that myth of the spirits, even when she was still a heathen. She was very devoted to her husband,—a rare thing! So she did not leave the house when the rest did, to allow the spirit to feast alone. She said: "If he comes back I shall be only too glad to see him." So she sat in the house all the time, and saw the weasels, rats and mice investigating, saw their tracks, too, and knew they were all the spirits that ever came to the feast.

When the body is laid in the coffin and sealed up it is the wailing time, and is called the small funeral. We can hear the wailing half a mile off, for it is a token of respect to wail to their utmost capacity.

We have a great many Mohammedans in our part of the country, and among them the custom is that after a person is dead the body must be cleansed by water coming from above and falling down on the body; this running off again carries the dirt with it. The body must not be washed in a tub of water, for that would soil the water. The coffin used there is more like an inverted pencil box than anything else I can think of. It has a slide in the bottom, not the top. The grave is a very deep hole, that is, deep for them, seven or eight feet deep and roomy. Wealthy people line it with fragrant herbs; common poor people must use straw or grass. When the coffin is directly over the hole, or grave, the sliding bottom is drawn out and the body drops down into the grave.

If it falls face down that is very unlucky, the spirit is in trouble and there must be great wailing, but if it falls face upward the spirit is happy.

I have seen very few children's coffins; ordinarily they have none; children's coffins are, indeed, not made. They are simply rolled in straw mats and laid out in the fields on the graves of grown people. It is very sad to see these poor little bodies cast out among the graves, and sometimes not quite dead. I was very much shocked one day when, walking with a friend, I saw a dog running along with something in its mouth, and we found out it was a little dead baby. But sometimes the children are treated with great love and respect in death. I think the Chinese admire our customs in this particular.

Miss SILVER, *Shanghai.*

Here children's bodies are disposed of by being wrapped in straw bags similar to those our cooks carry vegetables in, and then they are put into the "baby tower,"—"tower of bones," according to literal translation. A baby that has no teeth, is not able to eat, and therefore cannot be treated as a person. The Chinese do love their children, and it is most touching to see the way rough men will carry the little boy or girl as tenderly as any woman, and for hours at a stretch. The way they are treated when dead is due to superstition. The mother is turned against her dead child, thinking it must have been a spirit which came "begging the payment of a debt." If a Chinese cannot collect a debt he will go and live off the debtor, and if a child dies it is supposed to be the spirit of an enemy come to live off them to get even with them. So the child is wrapped in this coarse matting bag, and with it are put parched beans, that the child may become a person again, by transmigration, when the beans sprout. Wealthy families have a burial place for children at the edge of the family grave-plot, for a child must not be buried with grown people. It is put at one side, or they buy a small piece adjoining, and large enough for boys on one side and girls on the other. Baby towers have two openings—one for boys and one for girls.

Sometimes, when a girl who has never been engaged dies, she is betrothed to the spirit of some boy who died unbetrothed. This is done by means of two tablets; one person takes the tablet of the girl, another the boy's tablet, and they go through with the marriage ceremony. The girl is then supposed to be married to the boy in the spirit world, and is buried in the burial place of his family.

Girls are buried in men's shoes, in the hope that they may become men in the next world. At the funeral, the relatives meet together and wail, while the priests are chanting and "opening the door of hell." A woman is

supposed to be immersed in a "lake of blood." Why is she there? Because at the birth of her children some one may have thrown the discharges into the canal and some one else may have taken water from the same canal to use in offering to the idols, which makes them very angry; so the woman is condemned to the "lake of blood" after death. She must be released, and it can be done, for a benevolent Empress wrote a letter to the King of Heaven, beseeching him for mercy that the time might be shortened; for if a woman has no child she is doomed to torment, and if she has one she is doomed to torments worse yet. The King granted her prayer, and as a sign that the torments would be shortened, on the third day of the moon it appears as a small horn. A ceremony must be gone through; the priests chant and burn incense and the relatives drink the blood soup, which is water sweetened with brown sugar, making a reddish liquid; the son follows the priests with a paper boat to rescue the mother; finally all drink of the sweetened water in token of acknowledgment of the pain the mother has endured, and then her soul obtains liberty. How pitiful and useless are their efforts to obtain pardon! pardon which our Lord would give them freely.

Mrs. Little announced that Mr. McEwen, head of Jardine's firm, had kindly ordered a photographer at twelve o'clock to photograph the Conference.

Social Customs.

By Mrs. T. RICHARD, *formerly of Shansi.*

I shall consider Social Customs under three heads: 1. Visiting customs; 2. Exchange of presents at great feasts; 3. Charities toward the poor, widows, orphans, etc.

The courtesies and kindnesses shown by women toward their fellows is surely one test of a nation's civilization.

Some are apt to think that courtesy in lands where there is not the knowledge of God's love and the consequent love and respect for one's fellows as children of the same living Father (which is regarded, and rightly so, as the root of all true respect and courtesy)—that courtesy and friendship without that knowledge must be only outside polish. But from what I have seen I am sure that much of it is far from superficial. I think we ought to recognise, in those who have not our full gospel light, the working of heart and conscience, which after all (though they know it not) is from the same divine source as that founded on knowledge of God's love; for, according to St. John, is not the Logos said to be "the true light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world?"

Frequently have I heard one lady with tears of sympathy, which brought answering tears into mine, tell of the struggles and sufferings of other ladies of her acquaintance, and also of the deeds of kindness to the needy done by others. Truly "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

1. VISITING CUSTOMS.

Ladies in China visit their equals very freely. The wives of very high officials are most to be pitied, as they have so few equals, the wives of Futai, Fantai, and Niehtai (Governor, Chancellor, and Judge) in the provincial capitals being *almost* confined to the select circle of the three!

We need not enter into minute details regarding all that visiting involves—the long process of dressing in best clothes, the long time spent before the mirror with powder and paint, the going in the covered cart (which in our inland cities answers to the brougham in Shanghai), the handing in by the boy of the visiting card (which unfolded is a foot and a half long, and is always returned and put back carefully into its leather case and so may last many years), the waiting in the cart till permission comes to enter—the hostess meanwhile putting on her best to do honour to her guest, the meeting at the front, second or third gateway, according to the rank of the visitor, the bowing and set salutations—during which each shakes her own hands, the guest humbly taking the lowest seat until pressed into the most honourable, the offered pipe (often, alas, of late the opium one!), or only a lighted spill, if the visitor has brought her own, the tea and cakes, the talk of family affairs, or, if one of them be a reader, the latest novel she has read, or it may be the latest theatricals they may both have attended,—on all these, I say, it is unnecessary to enlarge.

If the hostess can paint and embroider there will be a display of the latest work. If the visit be by set invitation and several hours be spent together, the visitor's skirt, by invitation of the hostess, will be carefully folded away, and there might be a game of cards with small stakes, over which they will wax excited, but—as a rule, I believe—keep in good temper.

Should the guest bring her children, be the visit long or short, these would go away laden with good things, which the amah (who has provided a clean napkin on purpose) wraps up and takes home, the napkin always being coloured, never white, which to them would look funereal. There might also be a pretty embroidered satin pocket with gay tassels hung on the side button of each child's dress, which it would be uncivil to open on the spot, but afterwards would be found to contain a tiny bright piece of silver wrapped in pink or red paper.

This was two or three times done in the case of our daughters, who were, like myself, dressed in Chinese fashion and were great favourites with my Chinese lady friends, though they would have been still more thought of had they been boys. These ladies used to shake their heads and say to one another, "Poor Mrs. Richard; she has no family, only four daughters!"

On leaving, there are again set polite phrases used, the hostess invariably saying how badly she has treated her guest and the guest declaring she has been treated munificently!

Should the visit be a good-bye one, not only would the children receive gifts, but the mother would most likely be pressed to take a souvenir from her hostess:—embroidery sewn by herself or daughters it may be. On one such occasion a mandarin's wife who could read, write, and paint, presented me with a folding fan painted by herself and the complimentary words at the edge written in fine style by her own hand. Here I may say that, though there are no schools for girls in China, in good families that have a tutor for the sons the girls are often educated with their brothers; but even so, it has been reckoned that only *one in ten thousand* women can read!

2. EXCHANGE OF PRESENTS AT THE GREAT ANNUAL FEASTS.

We in Christendom exchange presents once a year—at Christmas; Chinese ladies three times, viz., at New Year, the 5th of the 5th, and 15th of the 8th moons.

A Chinese lady with numerous friends requires to have a good memory on those occasions, or, as I with my poor memory had to do, keep a record in a note-book of presents received and presents sent out to avoid the awkwardness of sending back the same kind of things that had been sent by a friend. The presents sent are usually eatables—cakes, sweets, fruit, fowls, etc., in even, never in odd, numbers; that is to say, two plates of each kind of thing to the number of at least four. Should there be as many as eight or ten plates, the "kumshaw" (tip) to the bearer has to be considerable.

As far too many things are sent for the consumption of one household, the gifts sent by one lady friend can be mixed with those sent by another and forwarded to a third friend (hence the need of a careful record), otherwise the expense at such times would be unnecessarily great.

3. CHARITIES TO THE POOR.

This surely comes under the province of Social Customs.

When I had been only a short time in Tai-yuen-fu (now, alas, sacred to the memory of so many martyrs!), and had made the acquaintance of a

few wives of small officials and gentry, I thought it would be a good thing (as also did my husband and David Hill, who was with us at the time) to start a Dorcas Society among my Chinese lady friends, to meet once a week for an afternoon for mutual talk while working on wadded garments for some poor deserving family that might be known to these ladies. But I found that such a thing was quite uncalled for, and we never got beyond our first suit of clothes, because, meanwhile, I ascertained that every family of any consideration made it a point of duty, as every winter drew near, to make several such suits to give away.

Visiting among the poor in Tai-yuen-fu at the close of the great famine of 1877-79, I came across some poor old widows who, with tears in their eyes, told of the kindness of the wife of a small mandarin who, during the worst of that awful famine (in which between ten and eleven millions were reckoned to have perished), gave those poor women one good meal every day. Forthwith I made the acquaintance of this charitable lady, who seemed to think very little of her kind deed, saying, "How could I enjoy my own meals if these poor neighbours were starving?"

Some of you may remember in *Notes and Queries of Woman's Work* for last May a paragraph headed, "After Many Days." The young woman spoken of there as now being a good Christian and tracing her first acquaintance with Christian teaching to my visits and conversations with her mother, was the daughter of this kind-hearted lady.

Surely such people are well worth our earnest endeavours to bring into the *conscious* liberty of God's dear children (they *are* His children in a sense already) through the knowledge of His love revealed in Jesus Christ. Surely such people, like Abou Ben Adhem in that admirable little poem by Leigh Hunt, if not by the recording angel writ down as "those who love the Lord" will, like good Abou be written down as "those who love their fellow-men."

And who shall say but that such charitable ladies as I have described, and those who from pity to their fellow-men subscribe to such institutions as those for foundlings, of which we spoke the other day, and those for aged and infirm, widows and orphans, on that day when the King shall come in His glory and before Him shall be gathered all nations (or all the *heathen* as some interpret the word)—who shall say but that these shall hear the King say to them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you: . . . for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me. . . . Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren ye did it unto me."

Miss WHITE, *Chinkiang*.

I shall describe a social call. First, To get ready.—The most important part of the toilet, and that which often requires several hours, is dressing the hair and feet. Then, after powdering and painting, our lady arrays herself in a long-sleeved dress which (theoretically) conceals her small hands, dons her jewellery, which must be of gold or gilt, as silver is only appropriate for mourning, during which season formal visits are not expected to be made.

Our guest shows thoughtfulness for old and young by bringing some special dainty for the venerable lady of the home at which she is visiting and peanut money for the small bairns. If on a formal occasion, on entering the room she prostrates herself before her elders, while a bow is sufficient greeting for the younger members of the home.

Conversation should be carried on in that low, soft voice which is an excellent thing in women. Boisterous laughter must not be indulged, and “don’t show your teeth when you smile.”

Conversation has three restrictions:—

Don’t speak unpropitious words. The Chinese have a superstitious dread of the fulfillment of women’s and children’s fears—perhaps a tribute to their intuitive faculties, and often, especially at New Year’s time, you may see pasted in their homes the sign 婦女童言無忌, literally, “Women’s and Children’s Words without Dread.” This sign, it is hoped, will counteract the ill-effects of ill-omened words.

Another prohibition, and good advice for Britons and Americans respectively is: “Neither grumble nor boast.”

The third restriction on conversation is, “Don’t discuss mother-in-law or household affairs.” But conversation on embroidery and sewing is so colorless that this command is generally disregarded, and mutual confidences take place on the subjects of old ladies’ tempers and sisters-in-laws’ children.

Tea is served, and then after your elders and betters have left you, make your self-deprecatory remarks on your deficiencies as a guest, and take your departure, after bestowing perquisites on the servants.

GENERAL DISCUSSION.

Lady BLAKE:—I am interested in the custom of laying the dying person on the ground, for fear of having the house haunted. The same superstition obtains in remote parts of Ireland. The friends sit around and watch for the approaching end. “The time has come to lift him,” they say, and they place the dying one on the ground.

Mrs. LITTLE asked:—“Outside the door?”

Lady BLAKE :—"No, inside the door."

Mrs. GRAHAM :—The Chinese are afraid the spirit of the dead will wander in darkness, not knowing where to go, and for that reason they always carry a lighted lantern, even in daylight, with the coffin in going to the burial, to light the spirit on its way. Those who can afford it buy the finest pearl to put on the forehead of the dead, to give more light, and a pair of looking-glasses are put into the coffin to provide and reflect as much light *as possible*.

Mrs. POLLARD :—Why are children not buried? One reason is because the Chinese adhere so closely to that very widely distinguishing idea of seniors and juniors. The grown up people must be properly buried; the burial of children is of no importance; they may be buried or not according to circumstances. Many children are buried. If the family is able to hire a man to dig the grave the dead child is buried, but some are too poor to hire the man to dig the grave, and the mothers, not wanting to leave their babies on the ground, where dogs may eat them, wrap them in mats and hang them in trees. The Mohammedans in Yunnan do not use coffins, but bury their dead in shallow graves lined with stone and closed with stone. One man at Ta-li-fu was buried before he was dead, while unconscious. In the grave consciousness returned, and he lifted up the grave stone and astonished his family by appearing in their midst in his burial clothes. A very important thing is the choosing of a burial place, which must be selected by the priests. A military Mandarin, anxious to secure a good burying ground, sent some of his hair and finger-nails to different places to be buried, so that he should be sure to get the right place.

Mrs. LITTLE asked Mrs. Geo. Parker to speak on social customs, and she responded :—

Speaking on marriage customs, there are some things I should like to add to Mrs. Price's most interesting account. Girls must cry for three days before they are married. They are supposed to be so sorry that they don't care to eat nor drink, nor do anything but cry. They let others do everything for them. Again, when in the bridal chair a bride must cry. I asked one of them, "Why do you cry when in the chair?" She said, "If I don't cry, people will laugh at me, and say 'she wants to be married very much, O, so much!'" When she gets to the bridegroom's door, she must wait to be received, and people outside the door gather round. O such a crowd! Crackers are fired, and two ladies come out to fetch the bride. A man with a big hat asks each one in the crowd, "To what tribe, or stem, do you belong?" Chinese don't ask, "How old are

you?" but what is your tribe—dog, monkey, rabbit, dragon, or other of the twelve stems. All must be excluded from seeing the bride except those of the same tribe as the bride, that is, born in the same year. On her head is a red silk cloth, or handkerchief, the end of which she holds tight between her teeth, that her face may not be seen. The people outside say, "What a pretty bride!" "What tiny feet." They can't see her face, but can see her feet, and so say she is a pretty bride. The bride and bridegroom must sit on the edge of the bed. He sits on a part of the bride's garment that she may be a submissive wife, but sometimes she is not. They have a custom that, whether in chilly winter, or hot weather, July or August, the bride must wear wadded clothes, as in the depths of winter, and there is a great fire in her room for good luck. Afterwards she can take off her wadded things and put on her summer things. I tell you these things so that you ladies may know that customs are different in different places.

Mrs. CECIL SMITH spoke of the custom of "playing with the bride." There is a similar custom on the borders of Kansu. Among the Thibetan Lolos, they practise polyandry, that is, a young woman may have five or six husbands, but there is no shame in it any more than in polygamy. The Chinese are not so loose in morals, and the young married women, as a rule, are chaste. However, it is often said that among the *lower classes* there is not one pure girl or woman.

As to burial customs, rich people are sometimes kept in the home a long time until the right burial place can be found. They think that if they bury in the wrong place, the property will dwindle away. They cannot find a good place themselves; the fortune tellers must do that—get good dragon ground. A next door neighbor of ours died, and his wife kept him so long that it was getting to be unbearable, and the hot weather would make it worse. We tried to persuade her to bury him, but she said, "No! I cannot possibly do it, for the ground we have found contains only the dragon head and two claws, no body. It must have a whole dragon." After three months no place had been found!

Mrs. BERGEN, Chi-nan-fu, Shantung:—The Chinese manner of the treatment of guests is very different from ours. We take all the trouble before the guest comes, so that he may not know how much we have done. The Chinese idea is to take great pains and let the guest know it.

A Chinese lady will say, "Oh, you have spent so much money, so much heart!"

I keep a suit of Chinese garments in which to make and receive calls. When a caller is announced I hurry to change my dress, and, not to keep her waiting, may be buttoning my "kwatze" as I greet her. She would

say, "Oh, you should not have changed your clothes," thinking of course, I had put on my best clothes in her honor. And if I should keep her waiting and apologize for it, she would seem surprised. When I would go to see them, I was first assisted into the house by slave-girls, for a lady is supposed to have such tiny feet she cannot walk without assistance, and then they would keep me waiting a long time. I would say to a servant, "If it isn't convenient for the ladies to see me to-day, I will come another time." "Please wait a while longer," he would say, "they are just sweeping the room and getting ready for you." And sure enough, when at last the slave girls would help me in to be received by the ladies, I would see the floor dampened and evidences of sweeping and cleaning. At feasts I would say almost the same things they would say. They (my guests) would stop the servants, saying, "Don't put anything more on the table. We have enough. It is overloaded already! That fish must have cost seventy-five cents at least." They love to flatter,—would praise my dress and personal appearance. "How beautiful the oval of your face, how exquisite your complexion, how lovely your eyes and hair!" I did not know what to answer, or say, so I thought of a plan. I would try this flattery on them some time, and find out what they would say. So I put on a bold face, and the next time one, fully as plain as myself, called, I said, "What a beautiful face you have! such lovely eyes and cherry lips!"

She held up her hands and said, "Oh, you are just making fun of me!" After that I knew what to say. And I think after all there is something nice in acknowledging hospitable entertainment by saying, "You have spent so much money, *so much heart!*"

Miss COGDAL, Shanghai :—I should say that if one had no knowledge of China and the Chinese, Mrs. Richard's paper might lead one to think they have no need of the gospel and better notions than they now have. While it is true that they have many charitable institutions, and work for relieving those in need, we find that some of their charitable workers are not prompted by unselfish motives. It has been said they express solicitude and love for their fellow-beings. I imagine that some, perhaps the majority, give those garments to the poor as a matter of merit, and that the neighbors may see their good works. And I would call attention to this fact, that *they are just as selfish as we are*, and must have our Lord Jesus Christ to give them real true love and unselfishness.

Mrs. RICHARD said she had no thought of giving the impression that the Chinese did not need the gospel. They do need it; otherwise she would not have come to China.

Mrs. LITTLE :—I would remind you that it is not very easy to judge the heart. People who are not Christians may have good motives for doing good, and I am glad Miss Cogdal said, "As selfish as we are." Many Christians aim at laying up a store of good works, just as the Chinese do, and are self-seeking, though possibly not in exactly the same way. I certainly cannot believe that all the good deeds done by the Chinese are done from purely selfish motives and not prompted by kindness of heart.

One LADY said :—In regard to burial, I should like to say that a good deal of lime is put into the coffins, so that there is no offensive smell, though the body might be kept in the house for a long time.

Mrs. RICHARD :—In regard to graves, with us in Shansi the ground is of loess formation ; the grave is dug out and a shelf is cut laterally and bricked round, and on this the coffin is put and the grave sealed up with brick and mortar. Hermetically sealed in this way the bodies are preserved for years.

Referring again to social customs, the gentlemen who call on my husband would not think the call complete without seeing me for a few minutes before leaving. After dining with the wife of a censor the censor himself came in to chat for a while. It was the time of a high examination in Peking, so our talk naturally turned on examinations. He remarked to me, "I understand that your examinations in the West are all about clocks, watches, and such things,—the mechanical arts." The Chinese examinations are on high moral themes !

Lady BLAKE enquired concerning the Mandarin class. Are they all learned ?

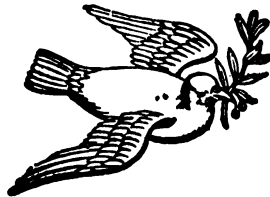
Mrs. RICHARD :—Some of the *Manchu* Mandarins are very ignorant ; can neither read nor write their own despatches, sometimes not even their own names. Children in the third or fourth standard in the West know many things of which even Chinese mandarins are ignorant.

Miss GIBSON, Lao-ho-k'eo, Shensi :—In our city, Lao-ho-k'eo, is a mandarin who is determined to put down the traffic in girls. When he hears of the cruel treatment of any daughter-in-law, or slave girl, he helps them and gives them his protection. At one time he saved three slave girls from an immoral life. He helps many of them. He is determined that no girl in his city shall be sold for bad purposes. He does all he can to prevent it and to protect daughters-in-law from the cruelty of mothers-in-law.

Mrs. POLLARD moved that, "in order to take full advantage of this unique gathering of so many lady missionaries, and to give due expression to the valuable work of the Conference, a day be appointed some time next week to consider practical suggestions in reference to the future of work among the women and girls of China." This was seconded by Mrs. Rich, with the amendment that the Conference be not limited to missionaries, but include the ladies of Shanghai, who, though not missionaries in name, are such in heart, and interested in work for the Chinese; and that the meeting be appointed for Tuesday, November 27th, from ten to twelve o'clock, at the same place. This was carried unanimously.

Mrs. LITTLE then moved a vote of thanks to Lady Blake and to Miss Blake for coming from Hongkong to attend this Conference; to the Presbyterian Mission for the free use of their chapel; to the King's Daughters for their efficient help in decorating the chapel and acting as ushers, and to the stenographer and recording secretary who had been doing such quiet but effective work at all the meetings.

The time having expired, and the photographer waiting, this fourth morning session closed with prayer by Miss Murray.



LADY BLAKE'S FAREWELL TO THE CONFERENCE.

Delivered at the Public Meeting held on Friday, at 5 p.m.

I thank you all most heartily for passing a vote of thanks to me for an act that needed no thanks, namely, for having come up here to have the privilege and pleasure of learning so much that is new and interesting to me, and, I hope I may add, of having made some new friends amongst you all. We have now concluded the consideration of the subjects that were selected for discussion at this Conference on the Home Life of Chinese Women. We have all, I am sure, been keenly interested in the excellent papers and addresses with which we have been favoured, containing so much information from all parts of this vast empire that must have been new to many of us. I regret to find that the lot of Chinese women—especially of the lower classes—appears on closer observation even a less agreeable one than I had thought. The hard fate of so many of the slave girls, for example, must excite the pity and sympathy of all men and women not altogether selfishly insensible to sufferings from which they are exempt. But while we have been gazing on a good deal of the darker side of the lives of the women and girls of China, we must not forget that shadows cannot exist without light, so there must be a bright side in life for many Chinese women, and some of the papers read have shown us that no small number of Chinese ladies, independently of European influences, extend noble-minded and practical charity to those amongst their humbler neighbours who may stand in need of such assistance. Possibly some of us may be too apt to judge the better classes of the Chinese by the standards of the lower orders, with whom as a general rule Europeans are chiefly thrown. How would the denizens of our ancient cathedral closes, or the occupants of our manor houses at home, like foreigners to judge them by the standard of the inhabitants of the lower stratum of our society and the waifs and strays, who too often in other lands bring the reverse of credit on their country? I cannot help hoping, likewise, that as habit becomes second nature,—and that to which we are accustomed seems less dreadful, even when intrinsically as bad,—so some things that to us would make existence a purgatory, may not be quite so terrible to the women of China as they appear to us. I would fain hope that even in such a matter as foot-binding, there may be some alleviation to the sufferings of those who practise it, in the pride that is said to feel no pain. Of the deleterious effects of the practice—physically and mentally—there can be no doubt, and it is most satis-

factory to find that the spark of resistance to the fashion of foot-binding has been kindled in many parts of China. As new ideas permeate the empire, I have no doubt the women of China will not be greater slaves to undesirable fashions or customs than are the women of other lands. The greater number of the ills and discomforts in the lives of Chinese women, I cannot help thinking, must be eradicated by the women of China themselves ; all that outsiders can do is to place the means of doing so within their reach. As year by year the number increases of cultivated and enlightened Chinese ladies, trained in Western science and modes of thought, while retaining their own distinctive characteristics, so will each of them prove a stronger centre from which rays of good influence will reach out to their country-women. I was once given a flower that had rather a remarkable history. I was told that somewhere in Greece a mine had been found that was supposed to have been worked by the ancient Greeks. Its site was marked by great heaps of rocks and refuse. The Greeks of old, great as was their genius, which in some ways exceeded that of modern days, were not acquainted with a great deal that science has revealed to us, and in examining these heaps of stones and rubbish flung out of the mine in days of old, it was found that most of it contained ore, the presence of which had never before been suspected, but which was sufficient in amount to make it worth while submitting the refuse to a process that would extract the latent wealth. So the great heaps of stone were removed, for smelting or some such process, and when they were taken away, from the ground beneath them sprang up plants, which in due time were covered with beautiful small yellow poppies of a kind not previously known to gardeners. It is supposed that the seed of the flowers must have lain hidden in the earth for centuries. May it not be like this with China? In her bosom have long lain dormant the seeds of which we call progress, which have been kept from germinating by the superincumbent weight of ideas, which, while they may contain in themselves some ore worth extracting, must be refined in order to be preserved, and must be uplifted in order to enable the flowers of truth, purity, and happiness to flourish in the land. Two of the heaviest rubbish heaps that crush down the blossom progress are ignorance and prejudice. I trust that the Conference we have just held may prove of some use in removing them.



EXTRA MEETING.

Tuesday, November 27th.

Mrs. Little was voted into the chair, and Mrs. DuBose opened the meeting with prayer, after which Mrs. Little said she thought they had better in the first place consider what Mrs. Timothy Richard had at their last meeting called "lines left out," as for instance the order of courses at a Chinese dinner or feast, where hot soup is not handed round at the beginning as with us, but at the end of the meal when we hand hot coffee. Soup at the end of dinner instead of at the beginning struck her as such better for the digestion.

Another line left out had been the period of weaning children. She believed this was often not till five years old, and had heard of one case of a boy not weaned till he was twelve, but did not know if this was abnormal. Probably the reason for putting it off so long was the difficulty about obtaining milk in China. And possibly the devotion of Chinese men to their mothers was owing to their having been nursed by them so long.

She had also been surprised that all the speakers who had so far touched upon the subject had condemned what they called the patriarchal mode of living as practised by the Chinese. Many people in China lived in lonesome situations far removed from any neighbours, and when the sons of any of these families married they simply added another wing or courtyard to the homestead; the children all played together and attended school together at home. The family in this way enjoyed pleasant social intercourse, and were protected from robbers and wild beasts, instead of each man living with his wife in a little, lonely hut, which would indeed be an impossibility in many a wild neighbourhood. It must be remembered that in China there were no police, no poor law, no alms houses and hospitals for the sick and aged. On the Thibetan border and in the West of China generally there were beautiful farm houses occupied by large families of many generations living together. And although she might be quite wrong, and deferred to the judgment of ladies of greater experience, this mode of life had always struck her as one of the beautiful usages of China, showing how amiable and good-humoured they must be to find it possible.

Mrs. T. RICHARD also spoke favourably of the patriarchal mode of life as best suited to the stage of civilization which the Chinese so far had reached. For one thing, early betrothals and bringing the young

bride to the protection of her parents-in-law, obviated what was often so painful in the West, viz., the hard struggle for existence on the part of so many unmarried women. She had often seen Chinese families living harmoniously.

Mrs. DuBOSE followed in the same strain and also testified to having seen many happy homes in China in spite of the presence of several daughters-in-law. It nearly always depended on the general temper of the family.

Miss HOWE said she had *never seen one happy* heathen family in China.

Mrs. STUART, of Hangchow, said the word for slave is 丫頭 Ya-t'eo. This term formerly meant little girl, because of the fashion of braiding little girls' hair into two little horns standing out from the side of the head. In country districts, especially, a little boy may be called Ya-t'eo to keep evil spirits from knowing he is a boy.

When Chinese are asked the number of their children they give the number of boys and daughters-in-law, but do not mention their daughters.

Miss MACKENZIE said :—In Chinkiang a slave girl is called a Ya-t'eo (丫頭), but she had often heard it used by the Chinese there in speaking of their own little daughters. In one of the highest class families in Yangchow the little daughters are called Ya-t'eo by their father, though one of them is dressed as a boy in the hope that the next child will be a son.

The order of courses at meals was then discussed, but without any conclusion being arrived at as to whether the European or Chinese method were most conducive to health.

Mrs. RICHARD said that one custom referred to on the first day of the Conference as a *singular* custom, viz., that the mother has to wait till her babe is thirty or forty days old before she dared go to the temple to burn incense, corresponds to a similar custom among the Jews. Even the mother of the Holy Child Jesus submitted to that custom.

One "line left out" regarding the infants was that at three months' old the friends came bringing presents, and on that occasion several things were put in front of the child, among them a book and a piece of silver, and what the child touched first was supposed to be an indication of its future career.

An interesting discussion followed on the patriarchal phase of Chinese life, in which Mrs. Price, Mrs. Pollard, Mrs. Davidson, and Miss Morton spoke favourably of the system, while Miss Howe spoke very strongly

against it, saying that never in all her experience had she seen such a household living without quarrels. Several said that at the present time, instead of urging the division of the family, those who have girls' schools ought to inculcate on the girls the necessity of shewing their Christianity by becoming good, dutiful daughters-in-law. Mrs. Pollard said that early marriage was to protect the virtue of the young people, and such marriages involved living with the parents. She strongly deprecated any attempt at present to change this Chinese usage.

Mrs. T. RICHARD then said :—As to remedial measures I should like to recall what was said by one of the speakers at the mixed meeting last Friday. It was then distinctly shown that comparison founded on knowledge, especially of Christianity and what Christianity had done for other nations, was the lever that would raise this people.

Looking back at what the spread of such knowledge has already done, fills us with hope as to what it may yet do in the near future when civil and religious liberty will, we trust, again be granted. Just call to mind the splendid edicts put out by the Emperor with the advice of his Cabinet of Reformers in the spring and summer of 1898. How had they got the knowledge without which they felt their nation must perish? None of them could read English; it was by reading books and periodicals in Chinese, prepared mostly by missionaries. Had the foreign powers sided with the Emperor and the Reformers, instead of with the usurping Empress Dowager in September, 1898, how many reforms might we not have seen carried to a successful issue by this time?—reforms on Christian lines too; for it is well known that the Emperor and the Reformers were seriously considering the adoption of Christianity instead of Confucianism as the national religion. It has also leaked out through the eunuchs in personal attendance on the Emperor that he has been studying his Bible and worshipping God, and I verily believe it. It goes without saying that he has been reading with interest the 129 books he sent for in the spring of 1898, 89 of which were publications of the *Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese*. As early as the autumn of 1895 the Emperor sent thanks through his tutor, Sun Kia-nai, to the translator of *Mackenzie's Nineteenth Century*, saying how much he had enjoyed perusing it.

Think too of the splendid Manifesto put out lately by the Reformers. Let us, considering all these things, go on in faith and hope, doing all we can to shed more light on this people, knowing that soon, if freedom be but granted, all that we have been deploring in regard to the home-life of the millions of our Chinese sisters, particularly foot-binding and slavery, will soon be things of the past.

Mrs. FITCH then appealed for communications from those who desired to do something for slave girls, give funds, etc. Shanghai has a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and there should be one for the prevention of cruelty to children. There is now a lady in Shanghai who feels called to this work. After some discussion of the subject it was left to Mrs. Fitch to confer with those interested and take measures for beginning work in Shanghai for the prevention of cruelty to children, with whatever broader developments might grow out of it.

Mrs. POLLARD then brought forward a few resolutions, three of which were passed unanimously :—

Resolved, 1st, That the various Tract Societies and other publishers of Christian books be asked to do more than they are now doing to bring out a series of fully illustrated books for the instruction of women and children; such illustrations to be in the Chinese black and white style.

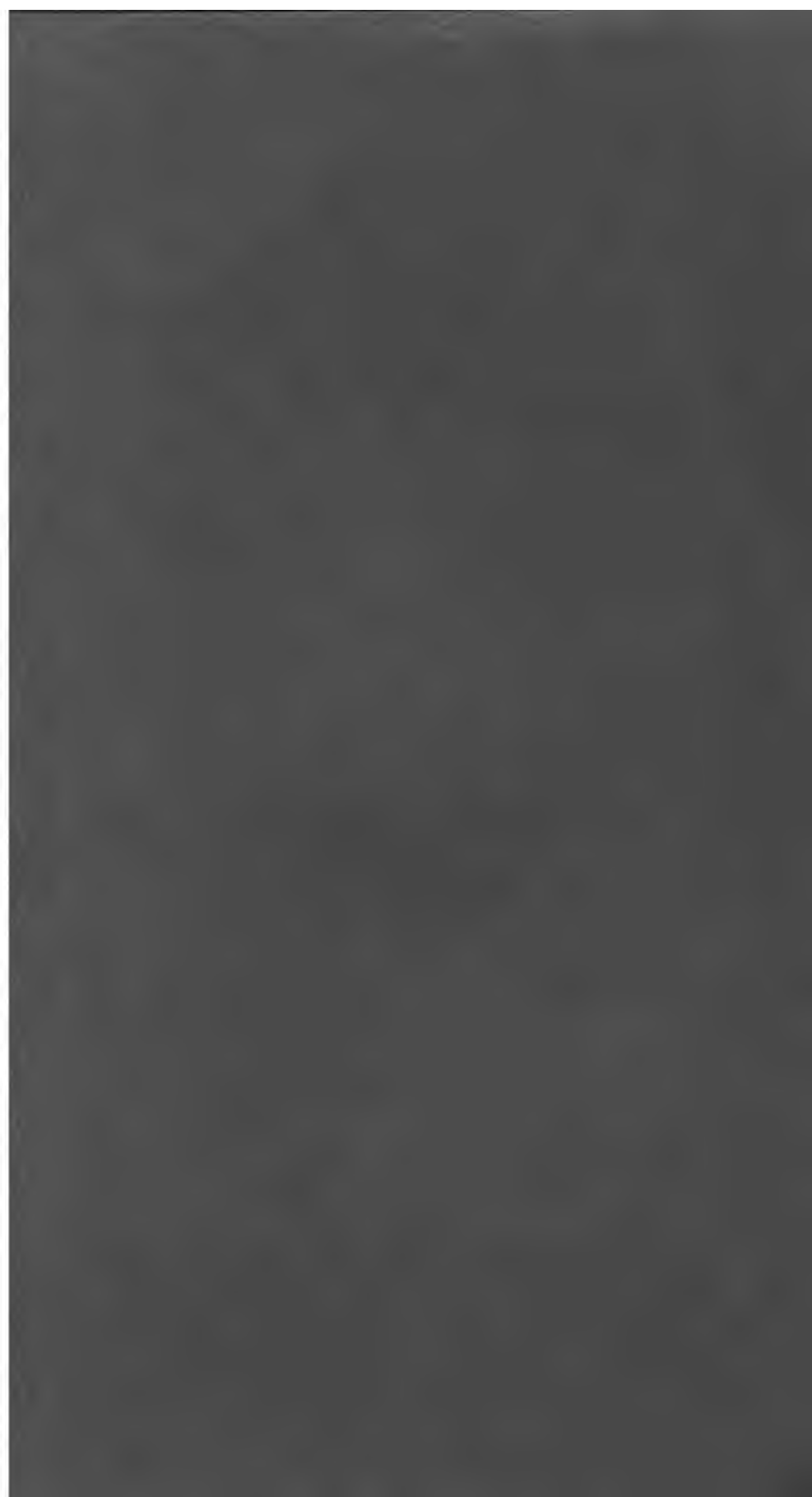
2nd, That in order to alleviate a vast amount of suffering endured by women and children owing to simple ailments,—such as parasites, burns, opium-poisoning, etc.,—this meeting recommends that sheets of instructions for prevention and cure be printed in easy mandarin for circulation in Chinese homes.

3rd, That all missions be recommended to give their native women workers some instruction in the elementary laws of health, and that simple books should be issued for this purpose.

Mrs. POLLARD also suggested that this waiting time in Shanghai be utilized by those from the interior who live many days' journey from medical help in getting instruction from lady M.Ds. in the treatment used in simple ailments, and particularly in receiving some lessons in midwifery, so as to be able to help Chinese women, who often in difficult cases apply to the nearest foreign missionary. In this way she thought many lives might be saved. She herself lived fourteen days from a doctor and often regretted her own inability to help.

Mrs. RICH moved and Miss SILVER seconded, "That a committee be appointed to arrange for continuing to collect information concerning the home life and social customs of Chinese women."

A permanent Committee has since then been appointed, consisting of Mrs. Little, President, Mrs. N. P. Andersen, Mrs. Hoste, Mrs. Rich, Mrs. Symons, Mrs. Williams, Miss Howe and Miss Silver, the latter to serve as editor with a goodly company of Corresponding Secretaries, making a network as far as possible all over China.







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CANCELLED

WIDENER
JAN 07 2001
MAR 20 2001
BOOK DUE
CANCELLED

